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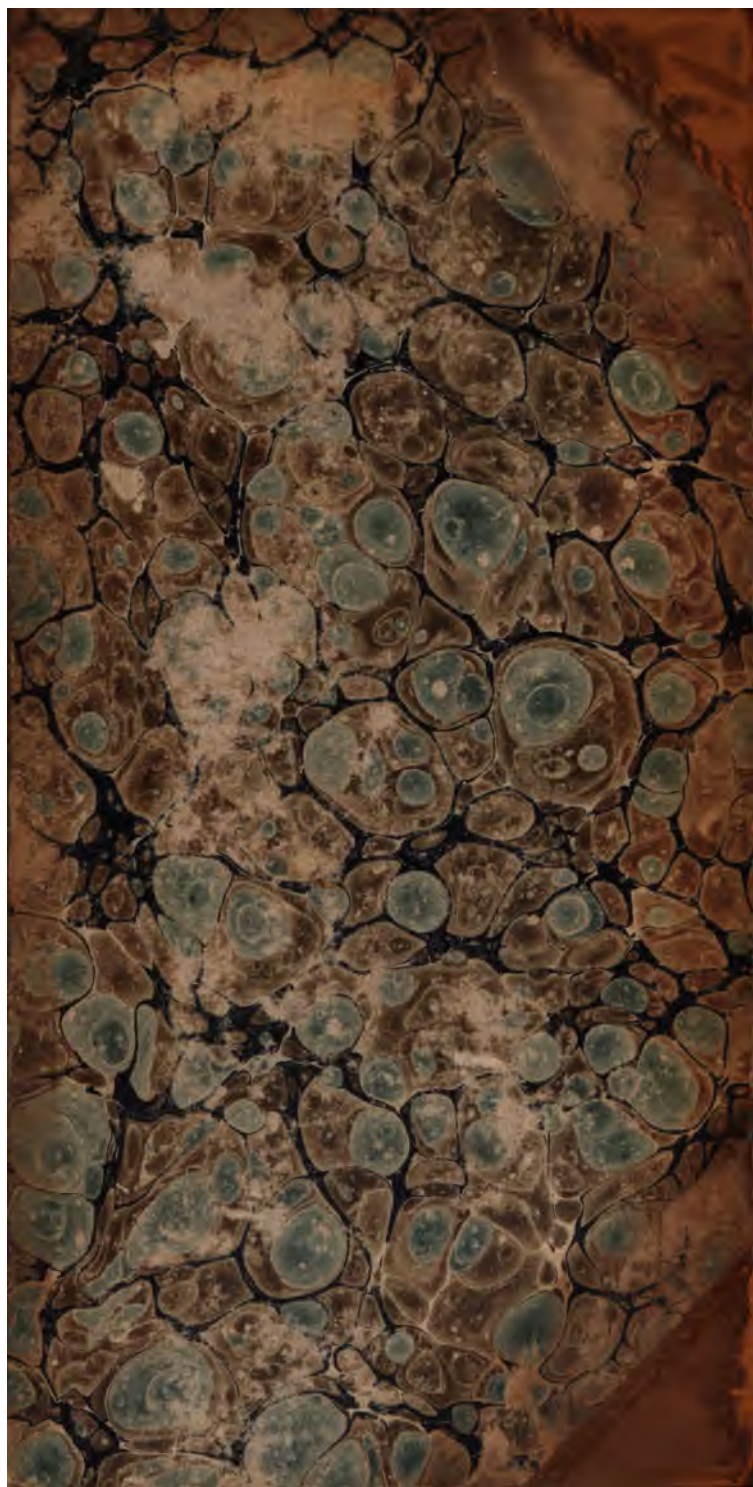
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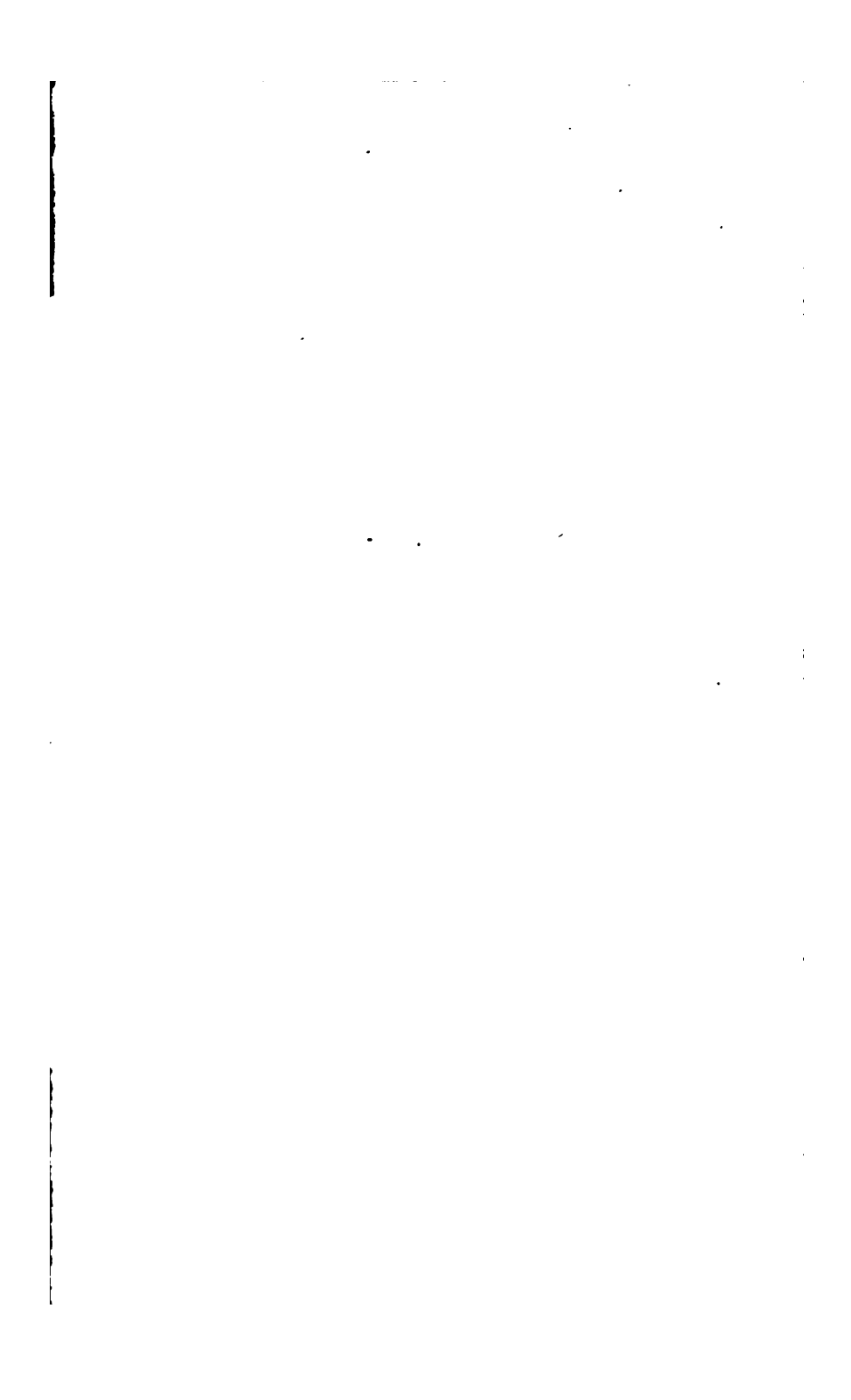




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CONFESSIONS

OF

AN OLD BACHELOR.



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In the press,

CONFESSIONS OF AN OLD MAID.

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59. 1827.
CONFESSIONS

OF

AN OLD BACHELOR.

Oh! que c'est un fatal présent du ciel qu'une ame
sensible.

ROUSSEAU.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

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114



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CONFESSIONS
OF
AN OLD BACHELOR.

BOOK I.

CONFESSIONS

OF

AN OLD BACHELOR.

BOOK I.

OF THE EARLY CAREER OF AN OLD BACHELOR.

CHAPTER I.

A FEW PAGES INTRODUCTORY.

WHY is it that I am pensive in the heart of gaiety, dull amid all the bustle and energy of life, isolated amongst thousands? The answer is plain, easy, and intelligible. I am an old bachelor in the middle of London. I live on from day to day, and from year to year, in a

horribly monotonous routine, without possessing one single human object of solicitude, and as little cared for myself as I care about others. In my time, I have liked many, disliked more, and despised more still; hated one, and loved one. Those whom it is customary to call *friends*, I have long ago lost; and I now stand alone in this wide, reckless region of humanity. I have no friend; I pay attention to few; for none do I entertain affection. I am solitary, morose, eccentric, peevish, nervous, envious, sensitive, censorious; in truth, a strange and unhappy being. Some excuse might be alleged for the contraction of so many unfortunate qualities: I might with justice attribute them to the effects of disappointment—to habits, too, of procrastination. On these peculiar heads I shall enlarge more hereafter: the statements I make at present are but preliminary; roughly advanced, and concisely. In fact, the awkwardness which, to a certain degree, I feel, in laying before the world the career of my life, and the nature of my disposition, is yet to be broken; and what I utter, I utter shyly, and with a feeling of re-

pugnance. I am exactly in the condition of a peevish patient, who is about to swallow his medicine—he nauseates the draught, yet feels himself necessitated to drink it.

Why, it may be asked, do I place thus voluntarily on myself such a constraint, as that of undertaking what I feel to be a task, and a painful one? No matter why; it is my whim. An old bachelor must not be asked for explanations of his motives or conduct. Suffice it to say, that whim, or vanity, or discontent, or some secret impulse or other, urges me to do so.

There will be some, perhaps, of my readers who may be inclined to pity me. I do not covet their pity. I am not making these statements with any view of being pitied; my only intention is, to set forth certain facts, the relation of which may take its chance of being of service, or not, to the world, as it may happen; if the former, I shall consider myself as having made some atonement for the little use of which, through the course of my existence, I have been to society. I cannot, at any rate, accuse myself

of selfishness: if I have been of no use to the world, I have been of just as little to myself. I have often, indeed, accused myself of having been of so little; often arraigned the wisdom of Providence for creating such a vast proportion of human beings, who from various circumstances *must*, in all probability, either from defects in education, from bad example, from want of inducement, from the compulsory pursuit of objects which the bent of their genius rejects, be placed in the same situation as myself.

My misfortunes, or faults, have made me find pleasure in railing at things as they are: at Providence, and at man: at politics, morals, and religion. I have found gratification in indulging in these fits of wrath, perverseness, and contradiction, when nothing else possessed any charm for me. I have been an anarchist, a misanthrope, and a sceptic, over and over again, when the fit has seized me. The picture I hold up of myself is not an amiable one: it is assuredly as little enviable.

Let the young attend; there is a good deal

of philosophy in my page: though the spirit may sometimes be (for it is not always) morose, and the style tart and disaffected; yet the lesson it conveys is a valuable one. How dear it is, and how dearly bought, none can appreciate, except by the ordeal of a wretched and lingering experience.*

* The classical reader will recollect that line of Horace, (above all other writers of antiquity beloved by myself,) which admonishes—

“Felix, quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum.”

This citation might have been introduced in the text; but I hate interlarding my text with quotations: so often have I seen this plan resorted to as a cloak for the want of ability, or power of expression.

CHAPTER II.

WHICH IS NO CHAPTER AT ALL.

JUST as I was putting pen to paper to continue my MS. I was interrupted by a violent rapping at the street door ; which set my whole nervous system in agitation, and made my fingers quiver like aspen leaves.

It had ceased scarcely a moment, before my housekeeper, (who is also my nurse, cook, and factotum,) Mrs. Busby,—or, as I more familiarly style her, Barbara, made her appearance, bringing me information that Sir Methusalem Goosewit's servant had come with a message from his master, who was going out of town the next morning ; hoping that he might

have the pleasure of my company down with him to his seat in Gloucestershire.

"Confound Sir Methusalem !" I exclaimed, before the message was completed ; "I know nothing of him, and have no wish to go with him down to Gloucestershire, or anywhere else ; nor ever will do so, because he has interrupted me in this way. Say I'm not at home, Barbara—not at home. Am I to be everlastingly annoyed with boring messages from people, about whom I don't care one straw, nor whether they are alive or dead ? Tell Sir Methusalem's servant, I'm not at home."

Barbara was generally very ready with an answer ; but seeing me more than ordinarily chafed, she thought it prudent to do as I directed her, without any comment.

I sat grumbling over the cause of my discontent for some minutes. "Never met the fellow above once or twice in my life : he had the impudence to introduce himself to me at the club : didn't want to know him : said he was rheumatic, and asked me if I was not ? inquisitive old coxcomb : don't want to know *him* ; why does

he want to know *me*? Uh! hum—bore—pest—plague—nuisance.” . . .

I was beginning slowly to re-commence my literary occupation, when another rap was heard at the street door: though a single rap, and sufficiently unpretending, yet the annoyance it occasioned me, was not less than that which I had a moment before suffered.

Up came Mrs. Busby.

“ Well! what is it? in heaven’s name what is it?”

“ Why, Sir, here’s the tailor come to ask you to try on your new pepper and salt small-clothes.”

“ Heavens! why could he not have come at any other time, rather than this? These fellows always manage to call just at the moment that it is inconvenient to see them. Tell the tailor I can’t see him now—tell him I won’t see him now: he must come again to-morrow.”

I resumed my pen; and was dipping it in the ink, when the loud double rap was repeated, with, if possible, increased violence. The quivering of the fingers, and agitation of the frame,

were brought on again as grievously as before. I sank back in my arm-chair, overwhelmed by the shock.

I had not yet come to myself, before my housekeeper had mentioned the particulars of this renewed interruption, at least twenty times.

“ Oh good heavens, my nerves !—What was it, Barbara ? that odious servant again, I suppose. Ah ! yes ; I hear : say it over again : Oh good heavens ! how my hand shakes—just repeat that—never had such a shock.

“ He has left a letter, Sir.”

“ Oh, don’t give it me ! don’t bring it near me now—put it down on the table.—bring me that salvolatile, and push my snuff-box nearer this way.”

“ But he begs an answer as soon as you can give him one, Sir.”

“ I’ll give him no answer at all ! (Oh ! my helpless condition !) Send him away—curse him, odious pest. Oh dear ! oh, oh ! uh, uh, uh ! won’t look at the letter this fortnight to come.”

My miseries were not permitted to cease here:

in less than a quarter of an hour afterwards I was nearly dashed from my seat, by a noise occasioned by the bursting of a gas-pipe in the neighbouring house. It set me quivering and kicking like a half-murdered frog. Mrs. Busby rushed into the room, with her voice at treble pitch, recounting the disaster, and hoping the noise had not frightened me.

Neither snuff-box nor sal-volatile could rouse me from my nervous helplessness, on the occasion of this last battery on my nerves; but something more potent in its effects: not assafoetida, nor the strong odour of garlic, but what was worse than either, the pervading stench of the gas. Falstaff in the buck-basket had not to contend with a more sickening, suffocating effluvia, than I had. I made a violent effort to raise myself up from my chair; I seized my hat and stick, and, stuffing a huge green silk handkerchief up to my nose, tottered out of the house with the assistance of Mrs. Busby, in order to go to my club-house, with the intention of continuing my confessions there. The fresh air brought me to myself a little;

and I was soon strong enough to walk to the place of my destination, grumbling as I issued from the street-door—"that it was very hard a man could not sit in peace at his own house, but must be driven about the streets like a vagabond, to find an asylum where he could."

My grumbling did not cease here, but flowed on the whole time during which it took me to reach my club-house. If my ill humour and discontent were ever excited by any one cause, it quickly extended itself to every thing around me: urging me to rail at the whole existing state of things; and to make malignant comparisons between things as they are, and as they were. The spirit of this growling has been infused into the chapter that is to follow.

CHAPTER III.

CONTRAST BETWEEN THE OLD AND MODERN
TIMES, IN THE LIFE OF AN OLD BACHELOR :
A CHARACTERISTIC SOLILOQUY.

“UH ! people talk of the nineteenth century being so superior to the eighteenth. I hate to hear such nonsense—no such thing ; don’t think so. They prate about modern *improvements*, while so many ancient prejudices are still suffered to exist, ay, and strengthen, every day. I hate to hear such stuff. Let them talk of improvements, when the barbarities and absurdities of their laws are abolished ; when the quackery of their systems of public education is at an end ; when their illiberality in sundry political tenets is exploded.

“Oh heavens! what a din! what a rattling those odious stages make! There never was any thing so bad as this in my time: none of these shoals of vile lumbering vehicles, charged and surcharged with their greasy cargoes of tea, coffee, tobacco and snuff-mongers, rumbling everlastingly to Greenwich, Putney, Acton, Camberwell and Lambeth. No no! there were no short stages *then*, to stun one at this rate: no! things were much better, I say, in my time. Uh, this comes of the horrid population that spreads so every day; and with it, the progress of building: why both the one and the other are the greatest nuisances in the world, if they are to entail on one the pest of these vile rattling stage-coaches. Then they talk of Macadam’s roads! fools! why, they run a chance of having their necks broken every time they travel over one of them. What coachman, I should like to know, can stop a carriage, can pull up four tearing horses, over one of these boasted ‘*smooth as bowling-green*’ roads? Pshaw! nonsense! he can’t do it: they might as well talk of being able to check a man at full speed in the middle of a slide. They

must have their necks broken: and they deserve it—it is all their own fault. Then they talk about being able to cross Hounslow, or Blackheath, without being robbed as formerly. Ad-dle-headed boobies! why do they only look on *one* side of a question?—don't they see, that if there is less thieving on the open way, there is more in private dwelling-houses. And this is one of the mighty blessings of modern improvements! this is the superiority of the nineteenth over the eighteenth century! A pest on such nonsense, and on the buildings, and population, and coaches, and Macadam and all!

“Uh! here's a great wide place! one of their new-fashioned streets: they call it Regent-street. People talk of its being fine, and airy, and spacious, and handsome, and beautiful, and the Lord knows what! To hear them talk, one would fancy it was paved with gold. Hum! uh! why *every* impertinent fool can stare at one *now*: there are no nice blind alleys, down which one may sneak unperceived and unnoticed. Architecture was architecture once; but it is now a monster—a mongrel, produced

by the illicit connection of Græcisms and Gothicisms. There are no neat simple churches now: you see Christian edifices stuck all over with the sacrificial emblems of paganism, bullocks' heads, and rams' horns: in one quarter you see great sprawling uncouth Caryatides—in another an extinguisher by way of spire, hoisted on the top of a Greek balcony. The mischiefs do not end here:—just as bad in other things; just as glaring, if not more so. You can't read a book, now, by a nice clearly-burning wax-candle; but must be forced to blind yourself, because every one else does, by straining your visual organs to see by the muddy light of sinumbra lamps: they nearly blind me! plague on the patentee, and all patentees! You can't in these times have your meat dressed by means of a good old-English-roast-beef, constitutional *jack*, but must have it sent up to you sodden, or raw, from one of Count Rumford's vile steam-kitchens. . . . You can't cross over from Dover to Calais, now, with only one chance of being launched out of the world:—drowning is


not a sufficient hazard for folks to incur now, but they must subject themselves to the double chance of being burnt, as well as soused to death. So much for the steam-boats—hum ! hah ! uh ! You can't get a good morning's exercise by being jumbled over the *pre*-adamite pavements, but must glide smoothly along over the flat surface of Macadam's roads. Roads in London ! vile innovation ! I say they are an abominable preventive of cockney digestion ! There are, now-a-days, no good wholesome dinners at four or five o'clock ; but a hot luncheon at three, and a dinner at nine ! the name of old English suppers is forgotten now ! You can't go, either, to see a play : nobody goes to the theatres, but in a child's party ; unless it be the trades-folk of the metropolis, and a few newspaper critics ; and now and then perhaps an old harrister, to save himself from dying of ennui. You're obliged to go and get hustled in the pit of the Opera-house at nine o'clock or past, cheek by jowl with some muddy complexioned, garlic-eating Italians, wedged in between these and half a dozen French Cy-

prians ! If you discern any acquaintances in the boxes, you 're obliged to travel up, God knows how many pair of steps, before you can reach them. Well, if you walk down to the House of Commons, it is only now and then that you hear any harangues worth speaking of—you don't see any worthy successors (except perhaps one or two men) of Pitt, Fox, Burke, or Sheridan; you don't hear those lofty, those warm, those eloquent bursts that once used to electrify you—no, no, those days of oratory, of political warfare, and political squibs, are gone by now. No Warren Hastings's impeachments now; no Government jobs now; no Junius's Letters. There was no union with Ireland *then*; no mushroom peers; no mushroom Irish baronetcies, made almost for the asking, or for the consideration of a shilling.—And now for the women ! Why don't they powder their hair now-a-days ? they have lost the art of tugging it back from the forehead, and forward from the back of the head, into a huge preposterous pinnacle, like a cassowary's crest, or the top-knot of a cockatoo. As for the gentlemen, where

are their precious pigtails? shame! shame! they are all cut off! cut off! cut off! who wears them now but myself, and one or two other respectable-looking old persons like me?

“What has become of the plain, thick, yellow dishes of Delf, from which we used at one time to dine? gone! gone! A man’s attention is called from the food before him, to gaze upon the green and gold, or blue and white service upon which it is placed; to abandon the contents of his plate, in order to discuss the beauties of the Wedgwood ware, or Flight and Barr’s china, in which they are placed. There are no quietly-burning, oil-fed lamps in the streets, but flaring, flashing, gas-lights, to dazzle one, enough to occasion blindness or distraction, and almost to roast the meat in the butchers’ shops.

“As for the innovations in the country, they are no less numerous than those in town. There used, once upon a time, to be stage-coach robberies; but now there are no adventures of this sort in Featherbed-lane, or elsewhere! Formerly, in my younger days, there were scarcely



any stationers' or booksellers' shops in many country towns; you couldn't buy a child's story-book if you would give your ears to do so, but must wait, if you wanted to make a Christmas present, until the next fair, on which occasion hawkers would come round with small, brown-looking, coarse-paper pamphlets, decorated with wood-cuts of Whittington and Hicco'thrift, at the price of a penny a copy, and threepence for a very *superior* one, as they called it; but now they demand of you, for a nursery-volume, eighteen-pence! its size being that of a great post octavo, filled with daubs, called coloured engravings.

“ The farmers' daughters used to be dressed in a plain, pretty, neat fashion, looking so simple and so modest, that it was a pleasure to see them; whereas, now, they go flaunting in a profusion of ribands and lace to church, to disregard the service, to stare, and be stared at. Their mothers thought little of going to market on a pillion behind Jack the ploughboy, on the broken-winded mare, whose wheezing and grunting (varied by the squeak, perhaps, of a conco-

mitant suckling for the market) was the only concert the good women knew : but now, Jack the ploughboy must not approach even to tie their shoe-strings ; their ears are now regaled with their daughters Jenny's and Polly's jingling on some second-hand, or twenty-second-hand, piano-forte, picked up at an auction.

“ Young ladies brought up in the country used to pique themselves upon making a syllabub, or even a pudding ; but now, they can do nothing, except pretend to squall airs that have long since been out of date in the metropolis. The joviality of the old country squire is now obsolete ; there are no Squire Westerns now-a-days, no wine-drinking and swearing ; the days of drunkenness after dinner, and ‘damn ye’ at every other word, are forgotten ! There is no sporting now, in a liberal way ; shooting parties are nothing more nor less than conspiracies, coolly and cruelly to butcher a number of poor creatures, who are forced to scamper about under the nose of their murderers, to be shot ! Pretty sport, to be sure ! . . . Then, how those country-

gentlemen palaver about the accommodation of their new gaols ! Why, Lord bless me, has not all this accommodation increased crime, and surcharged their gaols ? What benefit is there, I should like to know, in these modern introductions, that is not also balanced by its evil ? Why, then, do folks sneer at past times, since the sum of mischief (on taking every thing into consideration) is not diminished, but is just where it was ? A century hence all that has been done in this precious æra will, perhaps, be cancelled, and things brought back to what they were in my time : and even in two centuries hence the *improvements* of these times will again be re-established ; and so on, to the end of time, there will be the same alterations, without any real improvement whatever. Therefore I hate to hear people talk of *modern improvements* ; what they call modern improvements, will some years hence be called ancient absurdities, and antiquated prejudices.

“ I fancy I know as much about the merits of modern and ancient times, as those who pretend to be more knowing : but let me tell them

this; let me tell those impertinents who brag of their modern improvements, that they may do so with a little more justice, when they have rectified the various evils of the present day. Yes, when wretched, bleeding, and lovely Ireland is pacified, by whatever means that object may be effected; when the present fluctuations in the price of productions have been smoothed down to a fixed and level standard; when a general reformation has been made in the laws, both civil and criminal, in substance and in practice, and a new code has been framed; when the colony is withdrawn from Sierra Leone; when the humbug of free-labouring Africans is exploded; when something like uniformity has been established between the east and west sides of Northumberland House, which will only be, when the prejudices of cockney proprietors is overcome; when the projected quay is erected on the banks of our noble river; when quiet persons can walk by the side of the docks without being kidnapped under the pretext of legal impressment and public expediency; when the sale of game has

been legalized, to the entire abolition of poaching; (for what tradesman will not sooner buy game brought him by the proprietor, than purloined for him by the nightly marauder?)—when sweeping-boys are able to wash the soot from their faces, and heal the wounds of their raw and festering knees.... why *then*, I say, when all this has been done, people may indeed talk with reason of *improvement*; I shall then be willing to listen to them with a little more patience. When all this has taken place, why then—why then—there will be, comparatively, nothing left to be hoped for, but the apotheosis of the Lord Chancellor Eldon.”

I had by this time arrived at my club-house. Having sulked over dinner, I called for pens and paper, and resumed the subject of my Confessions.

CHAPTER IV.

(Confessions resumed.)

THE EARLY CAREER OF AN OLD BACHELOR.

MOST people in giving a history of themselves make religious mention of their parentage: I shall not trouble myself with any such unnecessary detail. What matters it to any one, who my father and mother were? Nobody cares about *me*; how then can I suppose that they can care about my parents? It is sufficient for me if I can, in the course of this work, excite a certain degree of interest for myself, without demanding it also for those who gave me birth. Surely nobody will, for *my* sake, desire to know that I was born of James so and

so, and Mary such an one. These trumpery particulars annoy my impatient disposition beyond any thing. Nothing pesters me more than to see, in passing by a church-yard, the multitude of inscriptions to the memory of sundry honest chandlers, butchers, leather-breeches-makers, saddlers, green-grocers, and *all* the insignificant fry of society. Who on earth cares a fig about them? The public, for whom they ran up long bills, care not about them: those whom they dunned never wish to think of them again. Their own progeny have other things to attend to, than to go to look at the tomb-stones of their progenitors of tallow-dabbling, and other similarly useful notoriety. I shall not indulge in this spleen above a moment; but so far I must be indulged. I know that this is all very bad feeling. The world will say with justice, why should not these worthy folks be allowed, without censure, to record their feelings of regard for the memory of a relative, in however humble sphere they may be? Let them, by all means, record as much as they please to the memory of their sires; only why

must they push the record before the public eye?—will the public sympathize with them? No!

The dignified, the mighty, the talented, have claims to public reminiscence: *they* can with justice call on us to sympathize in their good and great qualities: *they*, by the memorial of their example, call on us to emulate their virtuous and noble deeds. *These* are objects of public interest. Let us not hesitate to erect tablets to their memory; but, as for myself, and all such humble individuals, whether belonging to the mass of idle gentry, or laborious workers in trade—I will say in the spirit of the old Tuscan poet, “Let none shed a tear of sorrow over *my* obsequies, or decorate my grave with mourning.”*

Having given vent to thus much of spleen by way of prelude, I shall proceed to the history of my early days.

In no character that I have ever been acquainted with, can I find an exact correspond-

* “*Nemo me lacrymis decoret, neque funera fletu.*”

ENNIUS.

ence with my own: it is, indeed, a most extraordinary one. In whom did I ever find any similarity with myself in thoughts, in feelings, in enterprises? In vain do I seek for any one, in whom to see myself reflected. In vain do I search in any one else for a combination of my own sensibility, my own early shyness and diffidence, my own waywardness, melancholy, obedience to sudden and violent impulses, my own natural generosity, charity and good-nature, my own love of literature, (as far as it went,) my own weakly condition as an infant, my own independence of spirit as a man, from the earliest growth of my boyhood.

Love of liberty, love of independence, has ever been the idol which I have adored, for which I have pined throughout the period of my existence: freedom from restraint both in my own instance and in that of my fellow-creatures, the theme in which I have ever sought the greatest cause of exultation.

Born in a country which boasts, as the main principle of its charter, the freedom of the sub-

ject, and the unshackled declaration of the mind—early acquainted with the exalted advantages of Englishmen, I carried my enthusiasm so far as to resist all wholesome control as a boy: to become frantic at the bare idea of personal constraint, or corporal punishment. Hence, when at school, my turbulence was proverbial; the threats and the stripes of my master were alike disregarded; all salutary discipline was scorned: reading, which I loved, when allowed to pursue it voluntarily, and as my inclinations prompted me,—I loathed when it was compulsory: hours and hours did I, as a mere child, pore over books of amusement, to the great injury of my health, vigour, and appearance; but not a minute could I sit easy on the bench, when the discipline of a school imposed on me such and such a set quantity of grammar to learn, of verbs to conjugate, of lines to repeat.

In fact, my masters could do nothing with me by coercive measures; consequently, whatever I learnt was coaxed from me. My natural ability was sufficient to render the acquisition of knowledge easy to me; and thus I managed

to gain a good deal, when, by fits and starts, I was cheated into fixing my attention.

No one who saw me, or spoke to me, could ever have imagined that I harboured so lofty and refractory a spirit within me. I was shy beyond all measure; backward among strangers, and even near relatives; sometimes positively scared. What was the cause of such strange inconsistency in my composition? It arose from great faults in my education. Born of parents in themselves of a delicate constitution, their offspring, as may be supposed, did not (in my own instance at least) display any great vigour of frame, strength of sinew, or healthfulness of appearance. To make the matter worse, my parents, though handsome themselves, happened to have numerous relatives on both sides who were desitute of natural graces, and I, their unhappy bantling, took more after some ugly cousin or other, either on the father's, or the mother's side: and thus was I ushered into the world a plain and weakly infant. I have since altered very considerably. The exaltation of mind, as men grow older, gives them a more de-

terminated air, a more animated and assured countenance,—independent of the physical changes that time makes in appearance. Persons that had not seen me for an interval of a few years, had not the slightest recollection of me. Some people, indeed, have altered so much, that they have been inclined to doubt their own identity.

Well, being, as I have said, of such a frame and such an appearance, I had disappointed the wishes of my parents most cruelly. My mother reconciled herself to her fate, and ever anxiously strove, as all fond mothers do, to make the most of any little pretension I might have to favourable appearance. My father, on the other hand, though no doubt in some respects an indulgent parent, having a horrid antipathy to ugly children, could not bear the sight of me. The theme of my plainness was constantly reiterated in my ears, so much so, that I was ashamed to show myself before any body except my mother and a playmate of a sister. If I did, it was a trying task to me, and not without much colouring and confusion; and the answers to the two or three questions put to

me were uttered with an incoherent and hesitating accent. To be in company a moment was dreadful to me: if any subject of amusement was started, and the mirth occasioned a laugh, my shyness dictated to me that it was at my expense; if any personal deformity was mentioned, I conceived an indirect allusion was intended to my own plainness. This must have been as distressing to those around me as to myself; but there were no remarks, which incidentally might arise, at all referable to the chapter of human mal-appearance, which I did not take to heart and feel poignantly.

Now, there are few things which I dislike more in children, and young people who are growing up, than conceit; but still it is better to be too confident than over-diffident. Your friends around you can never in the one case be afraid of hurting you by any remarks which they may make on you personally, or on any one like you. In the other case, they are perpetually keeping guard over every syllable that drops from their lips—a state of constraint little better than the rack: they do so, because

they are unwilling to annoy the parents of the shy child, by hurting the feelings of the child himself. Again, a confident child will undertake much more, and, consequently, will *do** much more, than a backward child. The one will chatter away, and gain some little usage of the world and manners, some little intimacy with society and its forms; the other will remain ice-bound, and in comparative barbarism—reluctant to court humanization. The one will not hesitate to get up and dance when he is bid, or show his steps, or make any display for the amusement of the company; the other will scarcely know the use of his limbs, except to hurry out of the sight of those in whose dreadful presence he stands. But an unhappy condition of awkwardness of this sort is entirely owing to those whose office it is to educate a child. I have shown the reason of my own diffidence, to a certain extent: a word or two more will explain the whole of it.

My father, besides being gifted by nature in

* Nothing is so true as "*Possunt quia videntur.*"

point of appearance, was also eminently gifted by her in talent ; to see a son, whose appearance so little pleased him, gifted with mental endowments equal to his own, (*supposing* such to have been the fact,) was what he could not support ; he could never have believed it possible. I was, therefore, in addition to the notions I entertained of my own egregious plainness, taught to believe myself endowed with a very ordinary genius, and a very inferior power of acquirement. I felt the mischief of this for a long time through life, and have even now reason to deplore it. Nature, and the consciousness of such powers as she had gifted me with, always prompted me inwardly to disbelieve what I heard asserted of my faculties. She had, indeed, endowed me very highly ; no one's soul (so young as I was when I first heard these cruel opinions concerning myself) was more alive to philosophical impressions regarding life, its pleasures, its pains, its distresses, its triumphs ; more exalted by examples of heroism ; more indignant at the idea of tyranny, perfidy, or meanness ; more sensible of

the charms of poesy, the pathetic appeals of its elegy, the spirit-stirring strains of its martial epic, the soothing contentment breathed in the sweetness of its pastoral. Music was to me a source of perfect ecstasy; I was in a very delirium when I listened to a touching air. For drawing I had always a strong propensity:—to gaze on Nature, reflected in her every variety of shape, either in that of the human creation, or in her wider and more magnificent wonders, was a pleasure that would hold me lingering on the spot, unconscious how long I was delaying. My powers of acquiring were quick; my memory was strong and faithful; my invention ready in composition. In fact, I know not what requisite there is to make an accomplished man, which I had not given me by *Nature*. I know not what reason I had for not feeling myself entitled to hope as high a place as my equals in age, and as ample a chance of reward in our mutual competitions. Such, however, was not the case.

By *myself*, I could learn quickly, repeat clearly, conceive even brilliantly; but when I was called upon in the face of nine or ten boys

to utter what I had learned, to express what my notion was of the force of such and such a passage,—that sad and unhappy diffidence which was my constant bane, would rise to overwhelm me; to extinguish the spark within, that might, had it been properly fostered, have been taught to kindle forth and dazzle others; I would stand mute, with my head down, pinching the corner of my book; set down for a fool by my master, and by all the boys in the class besides.

Hence was it, that I did not do so much as many boys very inferior to myself. In fact, I am confident that thousands of dunces have prospered well, have flourished, have gained even a reputation for talent, by the aid of merely a good share of assurance.

The independence of character and determined tone of which I have some time ago spoken as characterizing my boyhood, belongs to a more advanced period of it (to which, however, I shall soon come,) than that on which I am at present engaged. I am now speaking of it at about the age of eleven, twelve, and thirteen: even during this period, Nature would sometimes

rise, and vindicate my cause for me. Should I ever happen to forget myself ; was I ever unusually elevated by good spirits ; by the promise of reward ; by a hint that I was in pretty decent appearance ; the master and the boys would wonder what had come to me on that particular day. Instead of being slow and hesitating, I was quicker than any one else in the same class ; instead of waiting five minutes before I could give my answer, when a question was put to me, it was anticipated while being given, and answered long before it was completed. On such occasions the tables were quite turned ; I used to fly to the top of my bench, instead of sinking to the bottom. This circumstance showed what I *could* do. In one of these luminous fits, I remember writing a comedy in three acts, at the age of little more than ten years and three quarters. The title of it I do not at the present moment recollect ; it was something about affectation. The scene was laid at Cheltenham, whither I had been taken for my health ; and the performance was not altogether

bad, as coming from a child so young. I conclude that this production was owing to the delight with which, so early as the age of six and seven, I had been impressed by reading scraps of plays and poetry, and Shakespear's comedies in particular.

CHAPTER V.

PREPARATIONS FOR A JOURNEY.

It was not till very late at night that I returned from my club-house: my nerves still disordered by the recollection of the clumsy fist of Sir Methusalem's servant, the interruption of the tailor, and the odoriferous explosion of the gas-pipe.

On entering my chamber, I found the obnoxious epistle lying on the table; but not—exactly as I had left it.

The chief misfortune to which we helpless elderly gentlemen are often subjected, is that of being in great measure swayed by a busy, middle-aged female, whom we had originally

taken as a useful domestic, but now tolerate as a necessary evil—a person who considers herself privileged to pry into all that concerns us.

Such was my case with respect to Mrs. Busby,—a very good sort of woman in many respects, remarkably attentive to me, and really not without some regard for me, but at times impertinently officious.

The mischief of these jades is, that, whenever they are taxed with having committed any thing not exactly agreeable to one, they always allege some excuse for their conduct. Now, nothing is more annoying to me than this trick of making a defence, especially when it is protracted (which it always is) to a wearisome length, besides being uttered in a sing-song drawling tone, which must inevitably throw one into a passion.

If the defence itself should not succeed, up goes the corner of the apron to the eyes: this is the *dernier ressort*, and puts an end to all discussion at once. It is a trick which may be very fascinating in young and handsome women; but beyond a certain age,—Oh heavens!

it is dreadful: there is no supporting an appeal of whimpering.

Mrs. Busby's tongue was one of the most glib, and I dreaded a long encounter with her; so, if ever I found fault with her, I was usually willing to retract what I had said: as to carrying on any opposition, it was too much for my nerves; and she almost always gained her point. Her person may perhaps be a matter of curiosity. A gentle bulge of the waist, and a stomacher pretty well protruded, proclaimed that she had fattened in my service, notwithstanding the numerous capacities which it was her lot to fill. Her skin was fair, and this circumstance, considering she cooked on occasions, spoke very much in her favour whenever I was inclined to animadvert on her conduct. Her eyes were light blue, and her face wore a consistent roundness with that of her person. That which annoyed me about her was, that her ankles were thick, or fat; at all events, clumsy. If it had not been for this falling off, I know not whether it might not have been possible for me to have committed myself, in the way of

matrimony, with my comely domestic ; as it is, I must indeed allow, I have been on occasions foolishly tempted that way—especially on a Sunday evening, when Dame Barbara's cap was always put on with an additional grace, and the bright red ribbons gave an eclat to the soft, baconish hues of her complexion.

“ Mrs. Busby,” said I, frowning, “ I see this letter has been opened. What fool has dared to touch it ? You know I detest having any thing of mine meddled with—but especially having my letters opened.”

“ Why now ! dear me ! to think that such harsh language should come from *you* ; when you know that it was I *myself* that opened the letter to save *you* the trouble, Sir,—out of regard for you, Sir ; *that* it was, and I need not surely be expected to give any other reason.”

“ You *yourself* did it, out of *regard*, did you ? I'm much obliged to you, Mrs. Busby, but would rather your regard would show itself in not interfering with my affairs.”

“ Well now ! to be sure ! I should never have dreamt of such words as these from your-

self. Haven't you had the rheumatism in that arm these ten years? Yes, you know you have. And why did I open the letter?—to save you the trouble:—I repeat it, out of regard for yourself. Many are the cold winter nights I have sat by your bedside—many are the days I have sat by that arm-chair—many are the letters you have asked *me* to open, and read to you, when your *own* feebleness would not allow you to do it for yourself,—and *glad* were you, too, to have me do it. Many are the basins of beef-tea, and the cups of gruel, that at such times I have prepared,—and how many a warming-pan have I . . . !”

The cant of domestic eloquence had now begun to flow apace, and it was high time to check it, before it should ultimately discharge itself in a flood of whimpering; so I exerted myself to hush the matter up, by saying that it was of no consequence, and asking her about the contents of the letter.

“Just exactly the same with those of the message. Sir Methusalem wishes you to go and see him for a short time in the country;

and I'm thinking that the trip is the very thing you're in want of; the fine country air will set you up for the rest of the year. It grieves me to see you look so pale as you do now,—and you know it does!—besides, the weather is so hot here in London, just now.”

The fact is, Mrs. Busby was a remarkably sly person, as most well-fed domestics are. She loved seizing hold of any excuse for going into the country; and whenever she could persuade me to embark on such an enterprise, which my weak state of health made it necessary occasionally to do, she strove hard to make me bend my course somewhere in the neighbourhood of her own friends, who lived at Gloucester, not very far from Sir Methusalem's place. All this I perceived in a moment, but I knew it was not worth my while to make any insinuations to that effect, as I should have been deluged with another torrent of cant, and an infallible torrent too of snivelling; so I said nothing, but, snatching up the letter, read it aloud with great impatience: its purport was to this effect:—

“ MY DEAR OLD COCK,

“ BEING a brace of invalids, but nevertheless brave chips of the old school, suppose you come down and stay with me a few days in Gloucestershire : it will much gratify,

Your's, very faithfully,

METHUSALEM GOOSEWIT.”

“ Vulgar ! familiar ! vile scrawl—what an odious expression to begin with ! What does he mean ? Impertinent ass ! Who ever began a letter with such an address ? “ Dear old cock ! ” Odious ! and then a “ *brace* of invalids ! ” I’ve a great mind not to go. What man ever sent such a letter to another before ! ”

“ Oh, Sir ! don’t be so hasty ; that is surely Sir Methusalem’s way. You have your ways too, you know.”

“ I tell you, I’ve a great mind not to go. May I not do as I please ? God bless my soul ! Yet still the country air may be of service to me. Yes, the change of air may do me good. Eh, Barbara ! what do you say ? ”

“ Ay ! that I’m sure it would ; all the good in the world. You know how nice you looked after your last journey ; and it was all that I could do too, to persuade you to leave home. Oh ! how fresh you did look when you came back ! and such a colour ! nobody could have told it was the same person.”

“ But then, this arm of mine. I never shall be able to bear the shaking of the journey. I’m sure it will be too much for me ; and my chest too,—do consider ; and my nerves, you know.”

“ This is just what you said before, Sir ; and did not the journey do you good ? Take my word for it, it will do so again. Ay ! and if it were ever so *shaky*, it would—but there’s no fear of that, now the roads are all made so smooth.”

“ Ay ! that Macadam has done this ; I’m sick of the fellow’s name. Well ! you really think it would do me good ? You think I may as well write to this ass, to say I will come ? I shall say that I will be with him in a

week's time from hence. Will that be time enough for you to get my things ready, and put the house in order before we go?"

"Oh dear, yes!" cried Mrs. Busby, her eyes sparkling with satisfaction,—“Oh dear, yes! and more than enough. I know all your things by heart:—ten pair of woollen leggins—ten ditto cotton under—sixteen fleecy-hosiery chest-comforters—twenty-five silk breakfast-bibs—seventeen cotton caps, summer—twenty-seven woollen ditto, winter—six lamb's wool.”

“Well, well! I don't want to hear the whole catalogue of my wardrobe's contents. Pray who shall you leave in charge of the house when we are away?"

“Oh! why Giles, the washerwoman's husband, to be sure; the *carefullest* creature in the world. All the plate will be locked up, you know, and the key in your own pocket; so there's nothing to fear.”

“I don't at all like the trouble of moving, Barbara. I'm sure I shall repent it, before I am three miles out of London. Oh dear, I'm

sure I shall; the thought gives me such a shivering."

"Why now, what's the good of caring so much about moving, when you have myself to make every thing *comfortable* for you? Giles shall go and hire a nice, handsome, easy chariot, and order a good pair of horses, and a careful, civil driver."

"Ay! mind—a careful driver, for God's sake!"

"To be sure, a careful driver. I'll go and send for him to look out for the carriage, directly."

"Do stay a moment, Mrs. Busby; don't be so hasty; how soon did I say we should be setting off?"

"Why in a week's time."

"So it was, in a week's . . . I don't know what to say about it. I feel just as if I were on the verge of a cold-bath—afraid to plunge in: there is something so dreadful in moving."

"It is your dislike to moving makes you such an invalid; if you took more exercise, you would be quite a different person, believe me."

"How can I move in such a state as my nerves are in? Consider too the cough I had last December."

"Why that was six months ago!"

"Yes, but its effects are not over yet: who knows? the carriage may be damp, standing, as it does, at the coach-maker's so long without being used."

"Oh no! no such thing, Sir: believe me, no such thing!—But the sooner I send to engage one the better."

"I'm sure I shall repent my folly—and if I do, mind it will be all *your* fault. Take care that the wheels of the chariot are safely fixed on, and well greased—and that the door shuts closely. In a week's time sure I shall repent it. You must mind, when we go, that my cloak is well aired—and mind too, that the seats of the carriage are aired with the warming-pan:—if those seats should be damp, what will become of me! Take care too, and have the earthenware feet-warmers ready—and Barbara, do stay one moment longer: I wish the postilion could have his whip muffled—that vile smack-

ing and cracking will be too much for my nerves."

Mrs. Busby did not wait to hear how much longer I could continue my directions, being too impatient to send Giles on his commission. I rang the bell once or twice to bring her back, but to no purpose, she had gone out on her errand. So I made up my mind to the effort of the journey: the week that intervened previously to its commencement was occupied in the continuation of my work.

CHAPTER VI.

(Confessions resumed.)

CHILDISH TERRORS.

BEFORE my narrative proceeds beyond the pale of my childhood, I ought to mention one or two striking incidents that attach to that period.

Of all human beings, I think a huge black woman is the most detestable to contemplate: such was the nurse that had the care of myself when a bantling! As all children have some bugbear or other, so had I mine, in the person of this odious negress, this sooty mountain of spermaceti. Long after she had quitted my family, her name was made use of to terrify me

into good behaviour. Most nurses frighten their children out of their refractory fits by telling them that "the black *man*" is coming to take them; but mine used only to suggest the "black *woman's*" presence, and my tears were dried up as quickly as they could be, my sobs subsided, and my waywardness was at an end.

This negress was not my only cause of terror; I had another scarcely less dreadful one, in the person of a certain pedagogue, whom I first fell in with at the house of some friends whose sons were placed at his school. It was my misfortune, as my uniform ill-luck would have it, to be subsequently placed under his tuition myself. As all schoolboys are bound in duty to recollect those under whose rod their education has been conducted, I beg leave to show myself not behindhand in offering a reminiscence of my own schoolmaster.

Some schoolmasters have the honourable reputation of a benignity of manner towards their pupils—of taking an earnest interest in their welfare and improvement—of being good scholars, or exemplary and prudent disciplinarians;

by which various qualifications they secure a place in the memory of admiring pupils in after-years, when they themselves are dead, and their pupils have become old men. None, however, of these causes have conduced to fix in my mind the recollection of my own school-master, but the far stronger one (as I humbly conceive) than any of them—of his having been my terror as a child. The reader shall judge of the reason I had for viewing him as such, when a portrait of his person has been attempted. His name was Douseem, a Doctor of Divinity of course, as every personage in his capacity is. The period at which I can describe this scion of divinity with most justice will, I think, be that of a dinner-party, at which I met him, at the house of the friends of whom I lately spoke.

A gooseberry eye, and a bottle nose, have but equivocal pretensions to beauty: but what will the imagination picture to itself, when it is presented with these features, merely as superadditions to a huge double chin, a pair of portentously shaggy and red eyebrows; whis-

kers to match, containing as much hair as a tolerably well stuffed chair-bottom,—dewlaps like those of a prize bull,—jowls as heavy as two great rolls of Dutch butter of fifty pounds weight each,—a head as lengthy as that of a horse, and broad in proportion;—a mouth, similar to that we observe described in the placards of the Bull and Mouth Inn, disclosing a phalanx of ebony, that would have supplied handles for knives and forks sufficient to stock a moderate coffee-house,—of such large dimensions were these fangs, and so deeply stained.

The head of the Doctor might well have been spared a small portion of the covering of his cheeks and jowls; but, unhappily for it, it was as bare as the hide of a singed pig, only it was a little cleaner looking, and shone scarcely less brilliantly than a new copper cauldron. It would have served as a decoration to the top of an observatory:—the head a representation of our spheroid of a globe,—while the body beneath should have stood as the Atlas which supported it.

The grin of this personage was so uncouth, that few ladies (unless of Amazonian fortitude) could have come within sight of it, when at all near the period of their confinement, without the certainty of a miscarriage. Not all the Afrites, not all the hunch-backed dwarfs, not all the malignant-visaged genii, of which Eastern tales relate, could rival the ugliness of Douseem:—not Dr. Parr of happy memory, nor Wraxall's portrait of Pepper Arden—these were beauties in comparison with him. Heaven defend me from the grin of this Barbasonides! I have dreamt of it above once in my lifetime—and might as well have had the apparitions of fifty grampuses around me:—they could not have alarmed me more.

The Doctor's person was in perfect consistency with his physiognomy: a paunch that rivalled that of a Suffolk punch, was, of course, the most prominent feature about it. Punsters would say that he did not stand upon *trifles*,—but the contempt in which I hold punning, will lead me to a different description of the Doctor's legs: they were fac-similes of Daniel Lam-

bert's, and, as their proprietor was splay-footed, a more horrid Leviathan of uncouthness and heaviness has rarely ever burdened the earth—(literally we may say *burdened*,)—than himself.

The manner of our Adonis was no less striking and eccentric than his appearance: the man was possessed, as most pedagogues are, with sundry quotations from Virgil, Horace, the ‘*Propria quæ maribus*,’ and ‘*As in præenti*.’ This was the whole stock of his classical display; the amount of his information; the extent of his wit; the shibboleth which he iterated on all occasions, and with which he could answer all demands, interrogatories, and marks. “Doctor! will you drink a glass of wine?”—to which Douseem would answer in a deep grunting voice,—“Hah! yaas—with pleasure,—yaas, yaas,—you remember, perhaps, what Horace says on this occasion,—ay, yaas, I have it—..... ‘*vile potabis*’—hah!—No! no!—I was thinking of..... ‘*Tea nec Falernæ temperant vites*,’—you remember, I dare say, yaas.”

Thus did this fat pedagogue answer on all

occasions, by some ready cut-and-dried tag of Latin or Greek, which frequently had nothing at all to do with the matter in question.

“ Doctor, they say your school is increasing wonderfully”—

“ Why hah ! yaas, so it is ; wonderfully indeed, as you say — yaas, I may confidently assert, and conscientiously predicate, that (hum ! hah !) it can vie with any ancient or modern institution—hem !—You know what Virgil says—as to his difficulty of expressing vast numbers—hah ! hum !—yaas—‘ Non mihi si linguæ,’—you remember, I dare say ;—or, as the Latin grammar has it—‘ Nomen multitudinis ;’ yaas, you remember the passage, I dare say : hum, ahem ! ”

Amongst other qualifications, the Doctor possessed that of being an enormous glutton—


“ Hah ! ahem ! hah !—yaas ! very fine haunch that, upon my word—very fine—keep the sauce hot—proh ! Jupiter ! keep it hot !—Virgil, you know, says, ‘ *Implemur veteris Bacchi, pinguisque ferræ.*’—But *I* am not *full* yet ;— a little

more, if you please, and a little thicker cut—ahem !”

I should observe that this last demand of the Doctor was its repetition for the fourth or fifth time. As he sat tolerably close to the haunch, the attacks he was enabled to make on it were in a threefold proportion to those which could be made by any other persons, excepting such as were equally close to it with himself: but such as were so, having less voracity of appetite, less importunity in the cravings of the gastric juice, the Doctor was left in the almost undisputed dominion of the haunch.

This favoured dish did not, however, afford him the power of saying he had made a dinner from it: there was still “ample room and verge enough” in the spacious caverns of his stomach for the admission of other *vivres*, to an extent nearly sufficient to feed a poor parish: in these other *vivres*, I include wild fowl, and other game, tarts and puddings, jellies and blanc-mange, creams, and sweetmeats. All this cram-

ming, on the part of the reverend Doctor, was carried on without the slightest inkling of remorse ;—nay, he rather seemed to exult in the triumph of being the “ staunchest feeder” at table ; and seemed, throughout the ceremony of dinner, to stuff with the anxiety of one who is eating for a wager. In the latter case, the disgrace of such enormous greediness is lightened, in some measure, by the inducement of the wager ; but in Doctor Douseem’s case I see no excuse to be made at all. It once fell in my way to witness rather a curious contest between a butcher’s boy and his bull-dog. The combatants vied with each other in devouring an inconceivable portion of carrion, denominated tripe ; but I am sure Doctor Douseem would have beat either of them : he was, indeed, an unique in the annals of gormandizing : a Heligabalus that stands by himself in modern history. I waited for some time to see when he should burst—burst, however, he did not, although assuredly a certain enormous black-silk waistcoat which he wore, was swelled out to the tightness of a drum ; whereas before,



albeit it was sufficiently distended, yet it had one or two creases discernible on its surface: these were now quite smoothed away, and the rotundity, which at the beginning of dinner would have measured at least five feet eight inches in circumference, must have added four inches to the amount by the time dinner was concluded.

Black silk stockings covered the colossal specimens of bandyism, which Douseem called his "legs." The seam of one of the stockings having (not by any means marvellously) given way at the back of the leg, suffered a portion of the Doctor's person to escape. I will not dilate upon the description of the mishap. The idea is none of the most delightful. In fact, to form at all a faithful notion of Doctor Douseem's appearance, imagine what a well-fed elephant or hippopotamus would be, could he be cased in pantaloons; I know no other object which could convey a more adequate resemblance of the portrait I have been endeavouring to delineate.

The contrast afforded to the Doctor in the person of a girl of about seventeen, must not be

passed by unnoticed. For the bottle-nose of the Doctor, *she* displayed a pretty little nose of an aquiline shape; for his gooseberry eyes, *she* possessed eyes as black as the berries of the sloe; for *his* infuriate and rubicund complexion, *she* showed in her cheeks the mingled tints of lily and rose. Her figure was as delicate and slim, as his was fat, gross, and clumsy; her voice as soft, as his was grunting and stentorian; in speaking *she* warbled, while he kept up a kind of horrid concert, sometimes growling like a bassoon, at other times imitating the shriller chorus of pigs in a high wind. But uncouth as Doctor Douseem's appearance might be, inwardly, it seemed, he cherished passions as soft and tender as mortals less externally repelling than himself.

Love, that cruel miscreant, was unable to let his bow remain unstrung: he must actually be guilty of the impudence of stringing it for the purpose of playing pranks with the reverence and rotundity of Douseem. A good strong aim, I trow, must the urchin have taken, to have pierced his victim's heart; for neither Ajax's

sevenfold shield, nor the hide of a buffalo, could have presented a tougher obstacle to the weapon of an antagonist, than the rolls of brawn that protected the Doctor's præcordia. The boy did, nevertheless, manage to shoot a dart through these fleshy impediments, and the seat from which he took his aim was that of the black eyes of Miss Jemima Fascellen, the damsel whose charms I have placed in contrast with those of her bulky lover.

I cannot help smiling while I relate it ; but positively, before the second course had found its way from the table, Doctor Douseem was deeply smitten with the adorable Jemima. What a division of glances did his passion occasion between the loveliness of venison and that of Jemima ! Falstaff calls Mrs. Ford his " little doe ;" and evidently the poor Doctor was puzzled which on the whole to admire most, the buck on which he was feeding, or the " little doe," on whose charms he was gazing, as they were placed opposite to him.

His love for the last did not spoil his appetite for the first ; but the two passions worked

simultaneously, in a most amicable confederacy : the one tyrannizing over the heart, the other raging in the stomach.

The grimace which the Doctor's visage exhibited, when on one or two occasions he asked Jemima if he could "offer her any thing," was the most delightful sight in the world ; a super-erogatory display of frightfulness that can scarcely be imagined. Poor Jemima ! Sweet Miss Fascellen ! She was little conscious what that grimace portended ; she little knew what distress she was occasioning to the well-fed reverence that showed her these civilities ; little did she dream of the impression she had made, (and strong must it have been, to have taken effect on such a colossus of fat,) until after dinner, when the amorous secret, which herself had failed to perceive, was explained to her by others, who saw it too well. An inquiry on her part as to the cause of so much laughter among her female friends, led to the important explanation. A confession was made to her of the honour of which she might boast in having Doctor Douseem for a lover. The girl, who

was a vastly proud body, and held her charms in no slight estimation, was so enraged when she heard this declaration, that she cried herself into violent hysterical convulsions, from which it was some time before she could recover.

CHAPTER VII.

TYBURN TURNPIKE.

IF the preceding chapter contained reminiscences disagreeable to me, still they were not, to me at least, unamusing; those which I am now going to recal, are not only disagreeable, but dreadful; and if my readers have been willing to laugh with me, they must now for a moment be content to be serious. An old bachelor must be humoured.

A more horrid spectacle than the execution of six people—three men, and as many females, can scarcely be witnessed by the human eye. Such was that which I once saw at Tyburn when quite a little fellow. A gossiping, gaping,

nursery maid obtained permission, one morning, to go out and see some sister of hers, and thought proper to take me with her. She did not express the real object of her expedition, which was to follow the mob to gape on the horrors of Tyburn.

Three or four times in my life have I had it in my power to witness an exhibition of this disgusting and shocking description; but, once to have seen it, was sufficient. Even more shocking than the exhibition itself is the hardened indifference of manner with which the mob gazes upon it—the vigour with which the whole machine of pilfering and picking pockets is in operation—the horrid levity of the remarks. It is my firm belief, that so far from operating as any salutary warning against the commission of crime—so far from acting as a prevention of guilt,—the public executions, by being so often witnessed, have the effect of hardening sinners and rogues; and by making them *used to the sight*, render them totally reckless of their own liability of one day constituting the same sorrowful exhibition in their own persons.

To the mass of children amongst the poorer classes in the neighbourhood, a public execution stands in the place of the theatrical entertainments enjoyed by children in a higher sphere. I observed three or four women directing the attention of their dirty little offspring to the gibbet,—to the ladder from which the unfortunate victim had been pushed to meet his fate,—to Jack Ketch,—and the cart in which the wretch had been carried to the place of execution.

There are few things with respect to the execution of justice in which greater improvement has been made during my lifetime, than in the abolition of that horrid procession from the prison to Tyburn Gate. It is so far more decorous, that the unhappy culprit should meet his fate near the place of his confinement, than that a vast portion of the peaceable inhabitants of the town, for some miles, should be disgusted by seeing him dragged among them with a dangerous and wicked multitude at his heels.

An improvement in the nature of our penal

code is not less requisite than in the arrangements, adopted as to the circumstances of its enforcement. The anomalous severity of law, which, in many instances, our statutes afford, makes one shudder at the bare idea of it. I must confine myself to speaking generally; if I ventured to particularize, the arguments into which I should be obliged to enter, would of themselves fill a volume. All I would ask is,—are not other nations subjected to crimes which our statutes menace with death, as well as England? are not other nations as wise as our own is?—their legislative enactments as solid? Yet are their laws equally severe with our own? No!—Do our laws prevent crime more than theirs? No!

I was once present in court to witness the trial of two very young men—the eldest was scarcely nineteen years old; they were convicted, sentenced, and left for execution for an offence, which, if it had happened under less *peculiar circumstances,* though not of less moral*

* Let such as are inclined, take the trouble of examining our criminal code, the nature of the offence

passed by unnoticed. For the bottle-nose of the Doctor, *she* displayed a pretty little nose of an aquiline shape; for his gooseberry eyes, *she* possessed eyes as black as the berries of the sloe; for *his* infuriate and rubicund complexion, *she* showed in her cheeks the mingled tints of lily and rose. Her figure was as delicate and slim, as his was fat, gross, and clumsy; her voice as soft, as his was grunting and stentorian; in speaking *she* warbled, while he kept up a kind of horrid concert, sometimes growling like a bassoon, at other times imitating the shriller chorus of pigs in a high wind. But uncouth as Doctor Douseem's appearance might be, inwardly, it seemed, he cherished passions as soft and tender as mortals less externally repelling than himself.

Love, that cruel miscreant, was unable to let his bow remain unstrung: he must actually be guilty of the impudence of stringing it for the purpose of playing pranks with the reverence and rotundity of Douseem. A good strong aim, I trow, must the urchin have taken, to have pierced his victim's heart; for neither Ajax's


sevenfold shield, nor the hide of a buffalo, could have presented a tougher obstacle to the weapon of an antagonist, than the rolls of brawn that protected the Doctor's præcordia. The boy did, nevertheless, manage to shoot a dart through these fleshy impediments, and the seat from which he took his aim was that of the black eyes of Miss Jemima Fascellen, the damsel whose charms I have placed in contrast with those of her bulky lover.

I cannot help smiling while I relate it ; but positively, before the second course had found its way from the table, Doctor Douseem was deeply smitten with the adorable Jemima. What a division of glances did his passion occasion between the loveliness of venison and that of Jemima ! Falstaff calls Mrs. Ford his " little doe ;" and evidently the poor Doctor was puzzled which on the whole to admire most, the buck on which he was feeding, or the " little doe," on whose charms he was gazing, as they were placed opposite to him.

His love for the last did not spoil his appetite for the first ; but the two passions worked

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to what is in reality a *code*: and I am really inclined to agree with them. We have laws without end, rambling, scrambling, quibbling, odious enactments, some made by parliamentary authority, some on that of the barbarous Norman innovators of the primeval law of the land: but we have no regular *code*.

Why, let me ask, should not every member of the British community be enabled to refer to the law of his country, condensed and systematized in one code,—as in the instance of the Code Napoléon,—rather than be compelled to hunt for it through a whole library of common law and statute law, of criminal and Nisi Prius authorities, and reports of cases? Let simplification, as much as the nature of the subject permits, be the principle on which our law is to be presented to the eye of the public; not that of perplexity and mystification, in which they now are, and by which they are rendered, comparatively speaking, a dead letter; except to a privileged few, who have, with much difficulty and pains, become masters

of that perplexity and mystification, and reasonably enough seek at length to profit by it.

Every French subject is able to refer to one comprehensive and moderately-sized volume, for the information which a person subject to the laws of England is necessitated to search for through six hundred *—with the chance, after all his trouble, of not being able to discover it.

In England, persons are frequently at a loss to know how to set about obtaining justice, when they require it; and must consequently pay heavy demands to attorneys and solicitors for putting them in the way of doing so. In France, a man has nothing to do but to refer to his Code, and he is there instructed in the mode of procedure, and knows, at any rate, what he is about, although his process may be ultimately confided to the hands of a professional agent.

Blackstone is the only comprehensive au-

* See Mr. Humphrey's proposals to amend the laws of real property, and for the formation, generally, of a Code.

thority we have, on all that is principally requisite to an understanding of the mysteries of justice, from the first solicitation of it, to the period at which it is dispensed. It is the only index to the various branches of our law, and affords a very good and perspicuous plan (founded as it is itself on that adopted by Justinian) for a systematic arrangement, or Code, of the laws of this country.

So much for what I have termed the "rambling, scrambling" extension of our laws. Now to say a word or two upon the quality of quibbling; and with reference to this I should much like to learn, what it can really signify whether the crime of house-breaking is committed a minute or two before or after day-break? Not the least in the world,—that is, in reality; but it does in our law; and it makes *all* the difference, whether a man is put to his trial or not for his villainy, as this trifling immaterial circumstance is stated, or not, in the indictment. What business has such quibbling as this to do in any salutary code?

It is not my intention to worry my readers



with any further instances in support of my assertion, as to the character of our laws: he must know well enough, without any attempts of mine to prove it to him, that a new code, both in the criminal, as well as the civil department of justice, is imperatively called for by the British nation. Would to Heaven (as being, at least, a well-wisher to my country, although I am, in general, indifferent to every thing,) I might live to see the day when the barbarities of capital punishments, in certain cases—when the absurdities of pleadings, both criminal and civil—when all the detestable jargon, unnecessary forms, and technicality attached to tenures, may be swept away as cobwebs that defile and disgrace the fabric of English justice.

The late consolidations of sundry statutes are, I should hope, but a prelude to more necessary and more general amendments. Even the powder and pomatum of the barristers' wigs are being put to flight by "new patent forensic, self-adjusting, treble-curved, flaxen, conveniences," which, to be sure, are ten times more ugly

than their predecessors, but certainly ten times less nasty and inconvenient. I recommend persons who are curious to see them, to stroll down to Westminster for that purpose, as I have done myself.

To return to the scene to which the reader was introduced at the opening of this chapter: its horrors were heightened by a circumstance which humanity can scarcely contemplate without a tear.

A poor woman had followed the fatal cart, which bore her only son to the scaffold: bad company had brought the youth into the habit of frequenting places where low gaming and profligacy were practised and schemes of villany concerted. His first enterprise in roguery was his last: he suffered, with two others, for a robbery committed on Hounslow Heath. The wretched mother screamed and wrung her hands under the cart in so violent a manner, that the passions of the mob began to be excited; especially as the unfortunate youth answered back the cries of his parent by his own tears and



protestations of regret: his arms he endeavoured to stretch towards her in the vehemence of his passion, but they were impeded by the bands which fastened them; (a classical scholar will recollect Virgil's picture of Cassandra :) it was a pitiable sight. The sheriffs' officers were obliged at length to have the mother removed from the side of the cart by force: this was done with great difficulty; she was carried to a post at some distance from the scaffold; she leaned against it, and gazed towards the fatal spot: her cries had ceased, from exhaustion; her tears no longer flowed; her eyes were wildly stretched open, and riveted upon the form of her child:—the moment that he was dashed from the ladder, and the convulsive struggle bespoke his dying agonies, she sank back lifeless, as if her soul had tacitly communed with, and was to wing its way with that of her son.—O God! whither do our souls wing their mysterious flight when they have burst these mortal barriers?

This is the dreadful truth reason is ever on the rack to scrutinize. This is the secret we demand to search, when gazing on the dying struggles of a fellow-creature.

Note. If there is any suggestion in the above chapter, in which my reader does not concur, I much regret it. He is the only person in the world I should be sorry not to agree with.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE JOURNEY COMMENCED.

THE week had elapsed, and the hour of departure arrived, before I was able to look over all that I had written in it; so I must postpone doing so just at present.

Mrs. Busby was as eager towards commencing the journey, as I was reluctant. One o'clock was the time at which we were to start; previously to which period a whole hour was occupied by myself in presaging the sundry ills and inconveniences which can possibly be encountered in a journey. The last words I uttered on quitting my house to step into the carriage were,—“ I repeat it; I am confident

I shall have cause to
and if so, it will be
Busby."

Mrs. Busby made n
her best to arrange
carriage; after whic
my side, screamed
all was right, and
woman was so de
fairly afloat on
that she could
outright.

The first he
me in makin
she had put
spectively st
One article
was broug'
following.

"Are

"Wh

it is,"

"I pu
you."

"Just arrange it round my shoulders; I begin to feel it cold: what is the temperature of the air, now?"

Mrs. Busby looked about, and felt in the pockets of the carriage, but did not give me an answer.

"What! is the thermometer left behind?" I exclaimed, with a look of despair,—*"What is to be done? Call to the postboy to stop at the first place that he can, and let some one be sent back for the thermometer instantly. How could you forget it, Busby?—How could you manage to forget it?"*

My housekeeper's blushes bespoke how much I was disconcerted, and being conscious of the seriousness of this instance of delinquency, I did not, according to her usual practice, make any excuse, except that she fancied it was put up, and was very sorry at it: it was left behind.

"At the first convenient place at which a man was sent back post-haste, I wrote, to bring 'the small thermometer,' to hang up on the left-hand side

of the second window from the fire-place in the bed-room—three inches below the middle panel.”

With this precise information the courier started; when lo and behold! on his return he brought back word, that search had been made everywhere for it in the house, and that it was not to be found; and that Giles declared, he was certain he saw it packed in the sword-case.

My rage at this was indescribable. The idea of having been delayed an hour and a-half, in the dingy asylum of a pot-house, for no purpose, very nearly brought on a spasm, that must have caused my immediate return home.

Mrs. Busby did not dare to look me in the face; she was completely overwhelmed; when, on opening the sword-case, the first thing that made its appearance was the unfortunate thermometer, about which such a bustle had been occasioned.

I heard her mumble to herself, that she was sure she had put it up; but that, having intended to put it in one of the pockets, she

was led to suppose that it had been left behind, on not being able to find it in that place.

I did all I could to repress the venting of my displeasure in harsh expressions, by which forbearance I was spared a flood of tears from my sensitive housekeeper, and a series of sobbing for the rest of the stage. I was, however, thrown into a violent fever; and contented myself with muttering every five minutes, that "I knew how it would be, the moment I was fool enough to leave my own house." Two or three hours of the journey passed away before I could prevail upon myself to break the silence I preserved towards the delinquent by my side; but she seemed so contrite, that I was softened, at length, into doing so. If I had not broken it of my own accord, I should, not very long afterwards, have been forced to do so, in the expression of apprehensions awakened in me by the refractory spirit of a pair of vile jobbing horses. These *obstrepulous* creatures, as the hostler termed them, were put into harness for us by a most impudent fellow of an innkeeper, at ——. His excuse for doing

so was, that there were no others in the yard; this I did not believe, but was obliged to submit. Half an hour elapsed before the animals could be made to start; and then they scampered along at such a rate, that I was in bodily fear of being dashed to pieces every minute. However, I was spared the adventure of an upset on the present occasion, in order that I might experience it on some future one; destined, perhaps, to take place at a later stage of this journey.

The fever into which I had been thrown by my rage, at the fool's errand in quest of the thermometer, was not much abated by the anxiety in which these obstinate cattle kept me. I was, therefore, glad to cool myself, and allay my thirst, as soon as we arrived at the end of the stage.

The first thing that was offered me was a filthy composition called ginger beer. I was glad to drink any thing; so I swallowed down a tumbler-full of it; but not with impunity: the sourness of the beverage affected me with

such pains and distresses, that I verily believed I was going to give up the ghost. Here was a fine opportunity afforded to Mrs. Busby for repairing the mischief she had done in not producing the thermometer. Poor creature ! how assiduous she was with soothing expressions of solicitude ; what an accumulation of hot flannels did she apply to my tortured person externally ; and what rare and fortifying doses of peppermint did she offer me for my internal relief !

By her attentions I was enabled to pursue my journey after no very long delay. The carriage went on at a slow and easy pace ; myself lying pale, woe-begone, languid, and shivering, in one corner of it, Mrs. Busby still unwearied in proffering me the consolation of words and peppermint drops.

In this interesting guise we arrived, at rather a late hour of the evening, at Oxford. The Angel inn was that to which the postilion drove us. I ordered a large fire to be instantly lighted in my bed-room, notwithstanding it was summer time ; and after taking some warm arrow-root,

with brandy in it, went to bed. Mrs. Busby took care of herself: she slept in the room adjoining to mine.

I slept for about two hours, when I was awakened by the violent rattling of the coaches that besiege this hostelry: and endeavoured, but to no purpose, to compose myself again to sleep: my nervous system was in too great a state of agitation to admit of being pacified; so I got up, and having lighted the candle, sat by the fire; and, by way of passing the time, continued the perusal of my Confessions as far as I had written them, which was to the end of the first chapter of my second book. If my reader is impatient that I should pursue my journey, he is surely unreasonable, since he must bear in mind that delay is one of my characteristics,* as he will hereafter learn more fully. he should also recollect, that the old Bachelor requires a little rest; and above all, that the object of this work, is that of the author's confessions, to which every thing else introduced in these pages is merely secondary, though not, perhaps, altogether extraneous.

* Witness, my reluctance to quit home.

CHAPTER IX.

(Confessions resumed.)

THE EARLY CAREER OF AN OLD BACHELOR.


A YEAR or two in boyhood makes a vast difference in character: at fifteen we begin to approach manhood; we become sensible of some feelings of respect for ourselves, demonstrated in an attention to dress and carriage, in a more deliberate expression of opinions, and reflection on actions.

My frame had been strengthened by the rude, though so far useful, discipline of a public school; and my appearance improving, I did not yield to any of my schoolfellows

in our various games of leaping, boxing, running, football, and cricket; and in flinging a cricket-ball, few of my own size and strength could equal me; and the pleasure these sports gave me, was every day more and more enjoyed.

The minds and bodies of men act reciprocally on each other; the disease of the mind renders the energy of the frame languid and reluctant, and *vice versa*.

As I acquired greater strength and elasticity of frame, greater health of appearance, so did I acquire greater vigour of mind. It was now that I began to think for myself; now was it that I first felt how much I had been wronged in my early education; now was it that I determined on a line of conduct for myself, of honest vindication of my own faculties and powers. This new independence of spirit taught me to scorn what others thought of me: the consciousness of my own endowments told me what I could do, if I pleased to exert myself, and what the extent of my faculties was. My character at school became completely changed: I was always the first, instead of being the last.



If I was not perfect in my lesson, it was because I did not choose to be so; application did not, perhaps, suit my humour on such or such a particular day. Thus, I acquired the reputation of a clever, wayward fellow.


I very soon arrived at that situation in the school, in which there is no power of rising more rapidly, than the mere gradation occasioned by those before one leaving school. In fact, there was no further emulation. I could lose no places, I could gain none.

This was a dangerous crisis; the effect it had upon me was to make me the very idlest boy in the school. I never looked at a lesson before I went into school; it was not worth my while; what laurels could I reap? none. As to the present loss of time, and the future mischief I was catering out for myself, I did not bestow a thought upon either the one or the other. The indulgence of the moment was all I dreamt of. In school, circumstances rendered it impossible I could attain a higher rank, which is the great ambition of boys. Out

of school, there were many objects of allure-
ment:—the river, which afforded boats, and
the amusement of angling, of which I was pas-
sionately fond, and at which I was also expert.
The exercise of my skill in playing with a
trout has many a time kept me far beyond the
period at which I ought to have been in school
on the banks of the Simois or the Scamander.

To ramble over the country, leaping over
hedges and ditches, intermingling various mis-
chievous feats with this recreation, had some-
thing about it breathing of freedom and inde-
pendence, which it would have been baseness
not to have preferred to sitting bent nearly
double upon a hard bench, poring over the
lesson of sixty or a hundred lines of Juvenal,
Cicero, or Livy.

But this idleness, as my pedagogue used to
tell me, “I found the root of all the evil” of
which I shall, in this work, have to lament the
results. In the indulgence of it, I was insen-
sibly given up to many debaucheries, even at
that young period of life ; to late feasting and
carousing, which was nothing more or less than



stuffing and guzzling prodigiously, under the title of enjoyment, good fellowship, and conviviality; not to mention the accompaniment of gambling, the invariable conclusion of our carousals, and by which they were generally protracted till the rays of the rising sun pierced through the shutters.

I declare, as they shot across the table, they always had the effect, on my mind, of a detection of our iniquities; and I was glad to hurry to bed and hide my head. An hour or two of sleep before the morning-bell rang the signal for prayers, was frequently all that I had in the four-and-twenty.


In the town near which the school was situated, was a vile habitation, in which there was a billiard-room: some of the older boys had become very expert hands at the game, and knocked the balls about into the pockets most "blazingly," as they used to call it. One day, on entering the room, we found a stranger there, an excessively civil, well-behaved person, with a very gentlemanly appearance, who stated that he was from Oxford; and as all

schoolboys look on University men with high respect, we of course were flattered by his attention, and in a short time were persuaded into playing a game or two with him. As is the policy with all sharpers, he allowed us to win of him at first, but not so very shortly afterwards. It is needless to say we left the room without a single halfpenny between us, having lost about eighty pounds to this fellow between seven of us. He consoled us for our loss, by saying he was a very uncertain player; that he had no doubt that, the next time we played with him, we should win back again all the money we had lost; and with this hope we agreed to meet him again the following morning.

One of the seven losers, less affluent than his companions, was particularly uneasy at his loss, and began, in the course of the evening, to express his doubts of the likelihood of the *Oronian's* being true to his appointment; and accordingly recommended that we should look for him as early as we could the next morning, that, in case he should have made his escape, we might as soon as possible set out

after him, and make him stand to his agreement by force, or refund our money; for we were now all unanimous in voting him a villain, a sharper, a reprobate, and a "gallows rascal," as old women say. The regulations of the school would not permit us to go in quest of him that evening. So, according to our determination, we sallied forth the next morning to the different inns in the town, inquiring if such a person as we described was, or had been, at any of them. At one of these we learned that such a person had been there, but had gone off the preceding evening, at rather a late hour, to an inn on the high road to London, about three miles from the town. Away we went, and scarcely had we arrived at the spot, when we found a stage to London just starting off, with the object of our search perched on the coach-box. One of our party, whose name was Hare, had some pretensions to being a whip, and, as he had always a good knack of making the coachman drunk, we agreed he should do so. Meantime he was to take the reins into his own hand, and upset us all very agreeably,


at a turning of the road against a high bank, at no very great distance off. Our *Oromian* friend stared at us, and seemed to suspect that some mischief was brewing; however, he made no comments, and kept his seat as we would have him do. The projected upset was not a matter of difficult accomplishment, for though the coach was heavy, yet the turning was very sharp, and the horses sufficiently frisky. So, contemplating a delightful overthrow, off we went, blowing the horn, and cheering and laughing, as if we were returning home for the holidays. Upon the event of the overthrow, it was our intention to leave it entirely to the coachman, drunk as he was, to remedy the mischief as he could: in the interim we were to lay hands upon our friend the sharper, who was to be dragged to a very convenient and very dirty ditch of huge dimensions; being a conduit down to the river, in which a vast deal of filth and drainings were carried away from some low marsh land in an adjoining quarter. In this ditch the sharper was to be soundly ducked, and left for dead, or little better.



Such was our meditated revenge ; but such the fates did not permit us to carry into execution, being pleased to impede it by a more tragical termination of our frolic than we had looked for. The horses, not being used to so much whipping as their new coachman thought proper to inflict, became ungovernably restive, and, instead of upsetting us neatly and conveniently on the high bank, whirled the coach over, some paces before we had reached it, in a ditch. Young Hare was dashed down from the box with so much violence, that his arm was broken ; and the unhappy sharper was battered so excessively, that he shortly after died of his bruises.

This is not the only frolic in which I have been engaged at school and college, the event of which has been marked by a tragical character. It has been my unhappy lot to witness two of my acquaintance drowned, one in a rowing match ; another from the cramp in swimming too far ; a third die from the effects of hard drinking ; and a fourth horridly maimed by a fall obtained in hunting.

I have never thought of this "sharper frolic" without being incensed at the rascality of the coachman, for suffering himself to be rendered so unconscious of his duty, as to be unable to prevent the occurrence of so shocking an accident. A good year's discipline in the tread-wheel would be too mild a punishment for such a delinquent. The tread-wheel was not established in those days; but there was a punishment of which they could boast, which was far more terrible—that of the pillory. As boys are always ingenious in mischief, we once, by way of revenge, (just on the verge of that happy period of racket and insolence,—the vacation,) procured a large, clumsy, old wash-hand stand, and by force stuck it, upside down, over the head and shoulders of one of the ushers: he had offended us by some excessively mean and illiberal conduct. We fixed this appendage on him as he was standing up in his desk, ramming his head through the perforation intended for the basin, while his arms were embarrassed by another perforation lower down. We were afforded a fair opportunity, in this moment of



limbo and perplexity, of deluging our usher with a volley of small shot, in the shape of Latin grammars, and books of the harder material of Greek; now and then a shot of a larger sort would be discharged, either an Ainsworth's Dictionary, or a Schrevelius' Lexicon of the octavo size. Nouns, substantives, and verbs deponent, which Mr. Usher had most tyrannically drummed into the heads of his scholars, were now reciprocally drummed against his own, and to such an extent, that the poor man was confined to his bed for some weeks afterwards. For this outrage, which in my own instance was prosecuted with very great leniency, eight boys were expelled from the school, being those who assisted to cram the wash-hand stand on the head of their victim. This trick went by the name of a "taste of the pillory."

CHAPTER X.

(Confessions resumed.)

THE EARLY CAREER OF AN OLD BACHELOR.

“Good gracious! where can those papers be?—they are lost!—the tenth chapter is mislaid!—what is to be done? I never can think of troubling myself to write it over again!” I pulled the bell,—I unlocked the cabinet:—I locked it, and unlocked it again twenty times: I looked under the cushions of the couch; I made Barbara stoop down and peep under it: I rummaged in the table-drawer—“Where can it be? always these hateful annoyances! sure to be the case! Every thing goes wrong! Nothing but contradiction and inconvenience! . . . Oh, here it is! I have it

at last, Barbara—that will do: I don't want you any more."

Such is the inauspicious commencement of the fair copying of this my tenth chapter. Now that I have found the rough sheets, (which are lying on the table, under my nose, under a large sheet of blotting paper,) I shall rest from my agitation for one moment.


Now then, I will begin again. I have taken breath. Being, as I have described myself, distressed with so many physical and moral defects as a child, it may be supposed that there were few of my relations, or any who had seen me, that could like me. As I grew older and was improved, many that disliked me before, liked me; and those who were inclined to like me originally, liked me better now I was more deserving of kindly feelings.

Above the rest, my father felt quite differently disposed towards me than before.

I am now flying to just the contrary extreme of childhood—to that of early manhood—to the period of my nineteenth or twentieth year. I

do so, because it is at this period that the character of a man permanently fixes itself, and he is entitled to establish his claim to being worthy of regard or dislike.

My father, I repeat it, so far from rejecting and spurning me, was really attached to me: I was agreeable to him as a companion; my presence was gratifying to him; he felt there was more to recommend me than he had originally conceived. This flattered and pleased me. Naturally of strong and warm feelings, my affectionate soul had, in my early childhood, suffered the most cruel shocks to think how little pleasing I was to the author of my being. I now gave full vent to the overflowings of my heart; I was rejoiced and gratified beyond the power of expression to feel that my father really did love me; for I felt that I had before been ill-repaid for the affection I had always entertained towards him. Now I was constantly near him. When absent, he was constantly writing to me. In my conversation, when at home, he felt pleasure; when absent, he sought concurrence and congeniality in my




correspondence. He had, indeed, been a little touched with remorse himself; and a recollection of the kind feelings which had been entertained for me by my other parent, whose loss I had now been some time compelled to deplore, upbraided him for his neglect of me, and incited him to a more kindly conduct in future. Besides, he was pleased to find that my character had turned out more generous, spirited, and forward, than he had in the days of my childhood been used to consider it.

Next to my father, there were only four persons whom I could call friends: I call them so because they were sincere in wishing me well; otherwise, as to three of them, they were narrow-minded, bigoted and prejudiced in many respects, and often very capricious, which were qualities for which I always entertained the highest disgust. Before I say a word more of my friends, I should express the feelings of tender regard I cherished for three sisters:—will it be blameable in a brother to say, they were amiable, handsome, and accomplished?

My appearance frequently gave my friends

cause of suspicion, I have no doubt, that the course I led was dissolute; the very reverse of that which it ought to have been. Much were they deceived: they little knew the nights of sleeplessness, the struggles of ambition, the ardent longings for distinction, the agony of mind concerning my difficulties, which combined to harass me. They little knew, I say, how all these causes, together with severe study, forced on me by untoward circumstances, and an attention divided with a variety of intellectual pursuits, conspired to make me look jaded, worn out, melancholy, haggard, and emaciate.

One of them, a venerable General, I often used to think, would reverse the unfavourable sentence he had passed on me, and pronounce a more faithful one. I was willing to think so, for he was not a man to form erroneous judgments in a hurry. He was no slave to blind, mean, and hasty prejudices: he had too much elevation of soul; too much goodness of heart. He had many sympathies for me; much sensibility that accorded with mine,



much nicety of discrimination as to my feelings.

Of those that I disliked of my acquaintance (relatives and others) there were many; not from any prejudice, not even though I had suspected that they disliked me; but because they had many disagreeable qualities. Some I thought flippant, some conceited, some vapid, some loquacious; *all* insincere. Some had unpleasant habits; the feelings of others did not accord with my own: and as there is nothing that binds men's minds to each other so much as congeniality, so nothing disgusts them more with each other, than a dissociality of ideas, tastes, notions, likings, and propensities.

Others I liked well enough. I liked different people in different ways.—The elderly (either male or female), if they were sensible, I liked, because they inspired me with respect for them: if I found them the contrary, drivelling, silly, and obstinate, I nevertheless liked them, because they afforded a subject for ridicule, a most delightful recreation when in-

nocently pursued. Of any attention which they might happen to show me, I was ever keenly sensible, and always eager to show my sense of it.

Young men I liked, because we chatted about things that suited our time of life; though indeed the habits which I had contracted latterly, of severe study, anxious toil, and solicitude of mind, rendered me more serious than most of my age, and gave me an air and tone of gravity more appropriate to a weightier balance of years than had as yet crowded on my head.

The girls I liked, because they contributed, beyond all other earthly things, to my gratification and amusement. In no one particular did I ever find more real relaxation than in a lively, wittily conducted flirtation with an intelligent, handsome girl. With hundreds have I flirted, and all thought me, no doubt, in love with them. From an excessive degree of natural modesty in my disposition, I had frequently an air of bashfulness which occasioned the colour to rise in my face: this was, I dare say, set down by my companion as the effect of a ten-

der emotion which her charms had inspired. But no! she was mistaken. It was caused by a sort of natural flutry and irritability of nerves, which I have not been able to subdue or get rid of, even to this day.

The feeling I invariably entertained for those who disliked me, was that of contempt.

One may despise in two ways: there are two descriptions of this feeling. The one exists in a haughty disdain; the other is evinced in a contempt of less dignified demeanour. The first is entertained towards an exalted object: the last to one which is mean, paltry, and despicable. If I were to analyse the expressions of countenance that testified these different feelings, I should say, that the first is evinced by the indignant contraction of the brow, the proudly curled and scornful lip: the last will be shown by the cool look of indifference, the sarcastic sneer, or even by a downright laugh. Of these two exemplifications, the first alone will belong to both the person disdaining, and the person disdained.

The last of these feelings I have entertain

towards no inconsiderable number of objects. One instance only I shall particularize, which will be that of a little insignificant, elderly ex-comb, who had made a fortune in India, in the rascally times of speculation and oppression, and had returned to his native country to share his wealth with a woman as foolish, addle-headed, and purse-proud as himself.

Fond of parade and finery, and all the trumpery ostentation which money enables men to make, this couple, when they learned that I was not blessed with independence, but was forced to pursue the means of earning one, thought proper to turn their backs upon me, not many days after I had received the *honour* of an introduction to them.

These silly people I pitied, yet at the same time heartily despised.

The dress of this old Indian, as of most Orientalists in this country, was perfectly curious. Instead of having one good warm pair of kersey-mere pantaloons, to keep his shanks warm, he must needs have *two* pair of white calico trousers on. Instead of a waistcoat, such as the fashion

of England prescribes to be worn, he dressed in a nasty-looking whity-brown thing of naakeen. Instead of a hat of black beaver, he carried on his head a wide-brimmed, shallow-crowned article of straw. Instead of walking about in a decent-coloured coat, he was ridiculously conspicuous in a red, flaring, pompadour jacket, or spencer. His neck was always thrown open, to the annoyance of every body that saw him: other annoyances also did he entail on those who happened to approach him too closely, by certain odoriferous exhalations, for which he was deserving of pity. The space between his nostril and upper lip was everlastingly bedaubed with snuff, of which he must have consumed at least three ounces a-day. His snuff-box was excessively large, made of embossed gold of eastern workmanship.

I have understood that once on a time he had been excessively stingy; as much given to hoarding his money, as he was now willing to make a show with it; and that he was parsimonious in a thousand little mean and paltry particulars. If a servant left him before his livery

was worn out, he would make a deduction from his wages, even to a fraction: if a scrap of toast remained after breakfast, he would carefully deposit it in a vase, in order that it might be demolished at dinner, or by way of a luncheon. Other oddities, too, I have heard of him, not worth mentioning. He had been much captivated with the religious tenets of the Brahmins, and was by many considered as genuine a worshipper of the Hindoo triad, as any in Hindostan. His conversation was everlastingly running upon the strange stories of the Hindoo mythology; of the mysterious monkey, and the sacred lotus, of Keylas, or Paradise, and the devotion, or rather the wild enthusiasm of the Suttees. The names of Bramah, Siva, Vishnu, Paravatis, and the whole conclave of Hindoo deities, were as familiar to him, as the church catechism is to a child brought up at a Sunday school.

AN INTERRUPTION IN THE NARRATIVE
OF A FEW PAGES.

I was continuing to peruse my MSS. when I was startled by a loud clatter in the adjoin-

ing room: this was the very apartment tenanted by Mrs. Barbara Busby. With what expedition I could exert, I hastened to learn what the cause of all this noise might be. The exclamations of my fair housekeeper sounded louder and more loud on my ear, at every step that brought me nearer to her chamber.

“Why, Barbara, what’s the matter?” I said, on entering her room—“what was that noise I heard? and what was the cause of your calling out so loudly?—has any body been robbing you? I see the door has been opened in a most unusual and violent manner. What can all this mean?”


“Thank Heaven! there is some one come to my assistance! but it distresses me that yourself should be at so much trouble. I was awakened by a vile wretch of a man, in a black gown, tumbling plump down on my bed: the shock awoke me instantly, and I screamed out on finding that there was a man actually lying on my bed, whose groaning and snorting alternately proclaimed him drunk. With all the force I could muster up, I succeeded in pushing him

down off the bed, and there he lies like a pig in the mire : the noise he made in falling must have been that which alarmed you—I am so sorry you were awakened.”

“ There he is, indeed,” I exclaimed, holding the candle over his prostrate person :—his academicals bespoke him a gownsmen, and I concluded that the history of his present condition was, that, having sat up late at some carousal out of college, he found himself unable to gain admission on his return home, and so sought a bed at the inn.

“ He must,” I observed, “ have come into your room by mistake, I suppose. If you will throw your bedgown over you, and get out of bed, we will drag this pig out into the passage, and there leave him ; for it is hardly decorous he should be found lying here in the morning.”

Mrs. Busby acquiesced most thankfully in my proposal, making many moral reflections on the shocking and disgusting vice of intoxication ; saying, that she had no notion at this time of any *gentleman* ever being drunk.



"You're quite right, Barbara; but young men will be disorderly and frolicsome, in defiance of the rules of behaviour prescribed by society. Lord! how heavy the fellow is!"


With considerable efforts, by means of pulling, dragging, pushing, and rolling, we accomplished the task of turning the intruder into the passage; there we left him. I recommended Barbara to lock her door, in order to prevent any farther intrusion hinting, that it was possible the gowmsman might be *shamming*, and also observing that the precaution of locking her door, whenever she passed the night at an inn at this famed city, would not be unadvisable.

With many expressions of gratitude from her, both for my assistance and advice, I returned to my fireside—not before I had heard Mrs. Busby's key grating in the lock. That gentle creature retired to her couch, delivered from the alarms to which she had been exposed; and I continued the perusal of my MSS. accompanied by the thorough base of the drunken gowmsman's nose.

THE NARRATIVE RESUMED.

The loftier sort of contempt, which I have distinguished as disdain, I have never had occasion to entertain towards any one; because the character who is worthy of being addressed with such feelings, is of too generous and exalted a nature not to inspire us with regard and admiration,—until some powerful cause be afforded for withdrawing these sentiments. It can only exist where men of exalted minds are born with hostile principles in great questions; or break off the friendships and connexion which had hitherto existed between them.

There remain but two dispositions of mind for me to speak of; the one of which is Hate: the other Love—Love, in its exalted, pure, devout, and rapturous sense; felt for one object only, cherished above all other considerations, with an intensity, an ardour, a zeal, which itself alone could inspire. This, however, is not the place to dwell upon the indulgence of this most delicious of human affections. Let me wait for my chapter of disappointments.



The principle on which I hated was that of an insult offered to my *vanity*. A susceptible, sensitive mind, can least bear, of any thing else, to have its self-love mortified; can least brook insinuations unfavourable to either the intellectual, or perhaps also personal condition of its possessor.


I have thus far traced my career to an important period of man's existence — his just launching into the wide world to seek a fortune wherever the waves on which his bark is tossed may impel him.

All that I have said will sufficiently show the reader with what an extreme degree of sensibility I was besieged: how alive my mind was to kindness, to disregard, to praise, to censure, to encouragement, to dislike. The bare mention of myself is a proof of it: it is not vanity, it is sensibility makes me speak of myself. Vanity implies an empty love of praise* or

* In great men, it cannot with justice be defined an "empty love of praise."—It assumes more the character of an ambition to assert what they feel is due to their merits.

attention; of showing one's self off before the eyes of the world, to be noticed or admired. No such feeling actuates me while speaking thus of myself; therefore no charge of vanity can be imputable to me. The nature, indeed, of this work forms, in itself, a sufficient excuse for the necessary egotism which appears in it. I do not pretend to say that I have not, nor that I always had not, a certain share of vanity, as all men have; and I should much regret if I had not been sensible of one of the most gratifying feelings of which the heart of man is capable.

Independent as my spirit was, when left to exercise itself by itself; yet it was, notwithstanding all the philosophy it summed up to its aid, considerably depressed by the reflection of dependence constantly presented to it. This was an endless source of vexation; a vehement cause of irritating my sensibilities: it took away a good deal of that liberal air, which during the recklessness of the best part of boyhood I had assumed, and plunged me somewhat back again into a diffidence of manner



before certain people; never before *strangers*, but frequently before those who had been accustomed to know me at an earlier period of my existence as a shy child. Such is the force of early habits; they will still be recurring, whether good or bad, after a period of disuse however long. Hence I was frequently assailed with my ancient malady of not being myself. Strangers would wonder what had come to me, and conceive I was indisposed; I mean those who had not known me from my childhood. Distress had crossed me, and melancholy besieged me. I was everlastingly out of spirits, and wore a constant look of dejection. I felt I was not on a level in station with my relatives, whose affluence afforded them all the enjoyments and luxuries of life. This was a feeling at which philosophy would scoff; still the comparison I drew between their's and my own condition was surely not gratifying.

Who is there who will be pedant enough to deny the truth of the common remark, that boyhood is the happiest period of human life? As long as there is an absence from care, from

thought, from solicitude ; a free indulgence in animal spirits,—a being must be happy. But this is a condition that is enjoyed at no period of life but boyhood. What period, then, can be so happy? The homage paid to great men, the gratification of vanity which talent enjoys as its tribute, is, no doubt, intensely delightful ; but then there is the perpetual goading struggle of *keeping up* the reputation already acquired, and the apprehension of possibly forfeiting it. This affords a picture of but a fretful state of existence : so surrounded too are the great by envy, malice, and detraction, not less than by admiration and praise.



CHAPTER XI.

A REMINISCENCE OF THE ONLY PLEASURABLE
PERIOD IN THE AUTHOR'S CHILDHOOD.

I do not pretend to much piety; but I am always willing to thank Heaven for any little happiness that it may have vouchsafed me in the course of my life. My childhood was so miserable that I have double cause for recollecting one short period of bliss which chequered it. After a lapse of sixty-three years, the kindness of Madame Gérard still lives freshly in my memory. The tenderness with which she used to treat me, a poor sickly, fretful child as I was, still has power to soften my heart in its most harsh and unamiable moods. I may well be

excused for flying back to the mention of this one moment of happy innocence.

When I was taken by the excellent person, whose name stands upon my page, to her residence in the south-west of France, I was very nearly seven years old. She lived in a pretty retired little château on the banks of the Gironde.

In the most lovely season of the year I passed my time, from June to the end of September, in a perfect elysium.

The sight of so beautiful a country, the liberty of rambling amidst scenes that were new to me, was a greater joy and recreation than my heart had yet known. I wandered, without the sense of fatigue, over woody slopes and rich valleys, picking flowers or pretending to take views of the cottages near the banks of the river, while my kind companion would explain all the parts of the wide picture of vegetation before me, directing my eyes to the tracts of meadow, of corn, and vine plantations, in succession. So strong were the impressions made on me by all I saw, that to this day do I remember the happy mornings we used to pass in

wandering to look at the labours of the peasants during the period of the vintage. And again, in the evenings, I recollect well their jocund dances upon the scene of their morning's labour. There is not a wild flower of all which she used to cull, and tell me the name of, that I do not to this day look at with pleasure, and regret as I pass it. There is not a stream that does not whisper in its babblings of those happy days I passed on the banks of the Gironde.

Madame Gérard was about the age of thirty-six; her husband was an officer in the army; she was by birth an Englishwoman, and an acquaintance of my mother's family. On her marriage she quitted her country for that of her husband. She used, at distant intervals, to visit England to see her friends, by which she recovered the esteem which she had in some degree forfeited by her marriage with a Frenchman: so strong were the mutual prejudices of the two nations, at that period. On the occasion of one of these visits she saw me, and took compassion on my weakly appearance, and soon won me by her engaging manner to agree

to be taken with her for a season into France. Her husband was at that time engaged in the duties of his profession, and she was left by herself to pass the period of his absence, in the various pursuits which her elegant and accomplished mind was fitted to enjoy. From her I imbibed a love for drawing, which I have ever since cherished. Music too she instructed me in, to an extent that would have enabled me soon to have made progress in it, had I kept it up after I left her: I regret sincerely that I never did, as I consider myself as having lost a delightful resource.

Her natural wit was not inferior to her acquired knowledge; the airs which she used to play and accompany with her voice were frequently composed by herself, and the words, too, she used occasionally to supply. For some time, fragments of these airs would cling to my memory; but every trace of them has been for years and years effaced. I should not even recollect either the words or the airs, were I to hear them sung to me again.

In a French book that I possess, there is a



stanza forming part of a song, written on a blank leaf. As the book is one of those few which I have preserved since I was quite young, it may not be impossible that this stanza might have been written in it by me when these songs were, some of them, fresh in my memory. If such is the case, I may perchance be giving the reader a fragment of one of Madame Gérard's songs, by inserting it :—

.
" Je n'aimai jamais de la vie,
Et ne payerai que de froideur,
Celui qui aurait la folie
De vouloir captiver mon cœur.
Ma liberté, point d'esclavage ;
Je ne veux jamais obéir.
Du ciel je reçus en partage
Un cœur qu'on ne peut attendrir,
Un cœur qu'on ne peut attendrir."

I have often wished to know the air belonging to this fragment: if it really forms a part of one of Madame Gérard's songs, I can only say, that the person who shall sing it as bewitchingly as she did, must have no ordinary combination of vivacity, archness, and simplicity. The whole charm of voice, of person, of

manner and attitude, which she possessed, when she sung, was peculiarly her own.

The bitter moment of my departure from her, drew from me many sighs and tears ; many criminations of the cruel letter which demanded my return to my parents ; many protestations that I would love her as long as I lived.

In our rambles we became acquainted (from often meeting them) with a Scotch family of the name and clan of The gentleman had thought it prudent to withdraw from his own country, in consequence of the unfortunate result of a duel, in which a near relative had fallen by his hand. The occasion of the encounter had, I believe, been a dispute relative to certain hereditary property.

This family was not a large one : a boy and three girls constituted the whole of it. One of the girls was a perfect little angel. Madame Gérard used to encourage my playing with these children ; but of all of them, my favourite was Ellen. They were constantly at the cottage of Madame G. and we as often joined the party at the Chateau de ———. I have long

forgotten the name. We lived at opposite sides of the wood, and a pretty winding lane through its mazes always afforded a good excuse for mutual visits. How many a happy hour did our little party enjoy on the brow of that wood, where it was skirted by the river and its rich verdant banks!

The pang I felt in parting with Madame Gérard, was divided by that which the loss of my young companions caused me. Ellen was about two years younger than myself; the boy, her brother, about three years older—just ten years old. Of her sisters, one was a year and a half older than Ellen; the other was, if I remember right, quite an infant. I had a great affection for this family, and therefore find pleasure in being thus minute.

No very long time after my return to England, I heard, in a letter from Madame Gérard, to my very great sorrow, that as my young friends were playing in their usual haunt by the river side, picking flowers, and gamboling about on the bank, the boy fell in, and was dashed away by the rapidity of the current,

amid the screams of his poor little playmates, and the careless servant that attended them.

The loss of this fine child, his only son, struck so sensibly upon the heart of the father, that he quitted the scene of his distress, and removed to Marseilles, where he shortly after died himself, of a fever.

These severe and repeated losses induced his unhappy lady to quit a country which harboured so many bitter recollections for her. Accordingly she came over with her remaining children to Scotland.

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BOOK THE SECOND.



BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

DISAPPOINTMENTS IN LOVE.


I AM now about to pass from the recital of what happiness I enjoyed in my childhood, to that which belongs to an age approximating the limit of manhood. I am about to speak of moments the sweetest, yet, at the same time, the most bitter of my life : on which are dependent causes not the least powerful of all that have conduced to the melancholy and moroseness, now so long characteristics in my habits of life.

The utmost limit to which my annals have been hitherto pursued, is that of twenty-three.

I now revert to that of fifteen, at which period I was about to quit school ; and shall speak of the events belonging to the six months succeeding it. At that point, a chasm of about five years will be left unsupplied ; it is occupied by the various incidents of a college career, which being very numerous, could not possibly be comprised in the limits of this work. As they are somewhat singular and characteristic, and, I might venture to think, not uninteresting, they shall be, at present, suppressed, with the view of forming a work by themselves, should any further acquaintance be encouraged with the life of an Old Bachelor.

If the lovely vineyards, smiling valleys, and verdant groves, that decorate the banks of the Gironde, are dear to my recollection, no less so are the heath-clad mountains and dark fir groves that surround Lock Fine. Inverary ! thy stern beauties are as dear to me, as the milder scenes, the more glowing richness of southern France.

I was speaking some time ago of a violent illness which the dissoluteness of my schoolboy



days had in their latest stage brought on. For the purpose of recruiting my health, I was sent on an expedition to the hills and braes of Scotland, during my holidays,—(my last Midsummer holidays). I was to quit school the ensuing Christmas.

Having lingered some days at Edinburgh, a place which I shall ever remember with pleasure, on account of the extreme hospitality and kindness which I met with during my stay there, I hastened up the country to Perth and Aberdeen, from thence to Banff and Inverness. In my return, I passed a delightful day or two in the neighbourhood of the Fall of Fyers, in the pursuit of my favourite diversion of fly-fishing. In fine weather, when these mountainous regions are lit up with a brilliant sun, I know no scene more interestingly romantic. The blue lakes, their shaggy and precipitous sides, the dark nodding crags of rock, and fantastic boughs, under which the boat glides in silence, all impress the soul with a thrilling awe, to the peculiar sensation of which it is difficult to give expression.

In my way towards Lochs Lomond and Katrine, I was delayed for some days at Inverary, and thus it befel. I was rambling by the side of the Loeb, when I heard the voices of people descending the side of the mountain; I looked back; I gazed with earnestness; I felt that I assuredly remembered the features of the lady who was the foremost of the party; and this remembrance was an immediate clue to another, which discovered in the features of one of her daughters those of my former playmate, Ellen * * *. I instantly hastened to renew an acquaintance which had now long slumbered, and had, perhaps, been on the part of this lady forgotten. Of me, she certainly could not have had the slightest recollection: I was so altered. We were soon, however, again acquainted. The introduction, and its attendant explanations, awakened some painful feelings; but time had allayed their bitterness.

I was invited to her residence, whither I accordingly accompanied the party, and took up my abode under that roof, beneath which



I was destined to experience a state of bliss, of which humanity is once, and once only, permitted to taste.

That roof now no longer exists. I have since—long since—visited the spot where it once stood. I have paused over it, and shed a tear to the memory of my early affection. While I lingered on it, my heart, cold as it had grown, was rendered transitorily sensible of the emotions it had once felt. I have heard somewhere a song which begins—

“ ’Twas here that first I lost my heart,
And here it fondly trembles still;
Too deeply sunk that early smart
For time to quench, for mirth to kill.”

I declare, though it is a somewhat bold declaration, that I would be willing to go over the wearisome stage of my existence again, for the sake of enjoying the pure enthusiasm of soul I felt at the period of my youth, of which I am speaking. The passion which was cherished then, must in vain be courted after the first occupation of the heart,—in vain be sought for

in any second object of regard, or be challenged at any period of life more advanced than that of its bloom.

Now I can fancy myself uttering all this extravagance, if I were yet a young man ; but as I am not a young man, but a musty and morose old bachelor, let me express something which is more in character with my years and disposition—certainly more true, and infinitely less rhapsodical.

It is all very well, then, for young men to rave about love, and to make ridiculous protestations of the purity of the feeling, and the respect which they entertain towards the object of their admiration. What more delights them, I should like to know, than to kiss the hand or the cheek of their mistress ? What greater picture of happiness could they imagine than that of holding her clasped in their embrace ? I know, from my own experience, that none could be more delightful, none more desirable. I remember full well the sensation I experienced at kissing the hand of my mistress ; I might, if my feelings of chivalry or bashful-




ness had not repressed me, have kissed her cheek at the same time ; but though I did not proceed so far, in my soul I longed to do so. I panted with rapture at the idea of pressing my lips to hers, of imbibing her sweet breath, and bending my eyes over the sparkling languish of her own.

Yet, does all this delight in proximity to the object of our passion, act on a principle completely *pure*? Assuredly so, if one is to believe what lovers are saying every day, and have said ever since the creation of the world—or rather have sworn ; for a lover cannot speak in any less impassioned tone than that of an oath, either by the eyes of his mistress, or some other feature about her. As often as he does so, in attestation of the *purity* of his passion, I maintain he perjures himself : he tells a vast untruth. But it is all very excusable ; I do not find fault with the perjury itself ; I only wish to show that a perjury is committed. I do not blame the passion ; I only wish to explain that it does not consist of that essential purity, which people who are in love, obstinately and

rhapsodically declare it to be. There is more of the sensual in it, than young persons, in their first attachment, dare acknowledge to themselves. Individual experience, individual consciousness, is the proof of the validity of my assertions: a genuine authority, which surely can not have deceived me.

Ellen * * * * * was, when I renewed my acquaintance with her, one of the loveliest young creatures I had ever seen in my life, as far as it had then gone, or that I have ever seen since. The first glance I caught of her face, taught me that I was desperately in love; at least I judge by the symptoms: I never was happy except when by her side, or in her presence; I never could think or speak of any thing or any body else but herself: her name was as perpetually on my lips as her image was present to my heart. To be able to show her the slightest attention was a delight to me; to hold her hand in the dance, or stand by her side, was a source of rapture; to see another blessed with that distinction was the most cruel cause of distress, agitation, and unhappiness.



Being at that time entitled to look forward to a tolerably handsome independence, I determined to enjoy it with my sweet Ellen, and no one else. It was a young age, indeed, at which I resolved on matrimony, and if it had taken place, I might at this time have had grandsons of twenty years or older: that it should take place, however, I was most earnestly anxious: I felt that I could never be happy but in the society of her I loved; and as Ellen did not repel my addresses, I looked forward confidently to the realization of my wishes.

To be sure, how amusing I used at one time to think it, to watch the flirtations of children: they are quite as great coquettes as their elders. I have witnessed just as amusing flirtations between little boys and girls, at a dance, as I have ever seen conducted amongst young men and women. I remember once a tiny red-headed urchin squatting himself on an ottoman, and gazing for a full quarter of an hour without moving, at a little dimpled good-natured looking belle, of scarcely more than six years of age.

I had not been at Inverary above a week,

before our party received an invitation to go down to the west of England, to pass some time with a family of cousins at Bath. I accompanied them thither, and had the pleasure of sitting by the side of Ellen during the whole journey. This was thorough felicity; it was not, however, destined to be of very long duration. My holidays had already reached their termination. A letter which I received from home, in answer to one from myself, mentioning that I was at Bath, contained an admonition to hasten away to school without delay. This was a bitter summons, notwithstanding it was softened down by a tolerably handsome remittance, and a paternal blessing, of which two, it is needless to say, that any schoolboy will much prefer the former.

I shall never forget the misery in which I passed the night preceding my departure; the tears that I shed; the sighs that I vented: the earnestness and transport of sorrow and regard with which I called aloud upon the name of my mistress. Sleep was out of the question: it was not courted; repose was not solicited;

the only pleasure or satisfaction afforded me was the indulgence of my grief.

The moment it had dawned, up I hastened and dressed myself. I hurried along the streets, from the hotel at which I lodged, (at that time such a place was not called hotel,) to the spot where the house stood in which Ellen lived. I placed myself in front of the windows, which I fancied might belong to her bedroom. I paced up and down before them, gazing on them, while I recalled every happy moment which I had spent in company with her; every feature of her face, every smile which had beamed across it; every sweet word which had dropped from her lips in our conversations.

From this indulgence of passion and regret, I was called away by the summons of the clock, which warned me, that in less than a quarter of an hour, the coach, by which a place had been engaged for me, would start for London; with reluctance I withdrew, though with haste; with an unwilling mind, though with forced and rapid steps.

To the great amusement of Ellen's friends

at Bath, we carried on a correspondence with each other. Really, as far as I recollect, it was, on my part, as little rhapsodical—as cool and reasonable, as could have been expected from a boy, whose head was a good deal crammed with the love of those trumpery romance pamphlets, which schoolboys buy and devour, as zealously as they do gingerbread or gooseberries.

As for the letters of Ellen they were always revised, previously to their being dispatched, by a governess, under whose discreet supervision they were sometimes written. This woman was a good-natured soul, and used to favour me herself with a line of comfort now and then;—to tell me how my love was looking, and that she thought of me. In fact, I fancy I must have been rather a bore to Ellen, for I used to be most importunate in my requests, that she would not fail to write; and bothered her not unfrequently with sundry gentle upbraidings for negligence, if she chanced to omit letting me hear from her, at least once in ten days.

It was not without the addition of certain

promises, that I should revisit Bath on my next liberation from school, that I was reconciled to obeying the letter demanding my departure. What was my rage, then, and disappointment, when I was informed, just as the wished-for termination of my school career was approaching, that it was positively necessary I should accept an invitation to pass the winter in town.

The intelligence was distraction to me. All the hopes of soon again seeing Ellen, which had buoyed up my spirits through the tedium of the interval between Midsummer and Christmas, vanished by the stroke of a pen. Under the impulse of my indignation, I sent a furious epistle home, declaring that I would not go to town, nor to any other place than that which contained my adorable Ellen. The name of home, I said, was indifferent to me, unless it purported the spot where she was to be found, and unless it was cheered by her smiles, and graced by her loveliness. Meanwhile, to complete the romance, I was in a high fever. The answer which I received to

this rhapsody consisted of a sober quiet remonstrance, explaining to me that I was an excessively ungrateful and graceless varlet to refuse returning to my best friends, after having been absent from them now a considerable time. By way of some comfort, nevertheless, a hope was suggested, that I might possibly see my mistress again at no very remote period. The letter ended by an admonition to be less violent in future; to return to reason, and be thankful that I had a home to come to, and friends willing to receive me.

This salutary epistle brought me, in some measure, to my senses again. I suppose, if I had not received it, I should have grown calm of myself, and have been my own admonitor upon some little reflection, and after the first transports of passion had subsided. Nevertheless, the hope of seeing Ellen again was the main inducement for the recovery of my composure. With this object before my eyes, I went home with more cheerfulness than I imagined I could have assumed. My tranquillity was not destined to be of very long duration. I had

not been at home above a fortnight, before a letter from the governess I spoke of just now, informed me that the whole party of visitants at Bath were going back directly to Scotland.—Edinburgh was the place of their destination ; and as soon as the spring commenced, they were to be re-established amidst the rocks and glens of the Highlands.

A word or two of reminiscence was added in a fair round hand by Ellen. I kissed this little postscript a thousand times ; and my first exclamation, when I had concluded the perusal of the letter, was, “How am I to follow them there ?—I have neither the means nor the opportunity—I shall never see her again I am certain !”

This stroke of distress threw me into all the frenzy under which I have already described myself as suffering, which terminated in a moping solitary melancholy. Nothing could afford me comfort, or assuage the poignancy of my anguish, for a considerable time ; I was entertained by nothing, and repelled all attempts to coax me into cheerfulness.

Time, however, which is able to mitigate the severest smarts, of course brought some alleviation to mine; it was a very long interval though before I could either rise in the morning or lay my head upon my pillow at night, without giving vent to my distress, without recounting the charms of my mistress, and dwelling upon her various beauties,—her languid dark blue eyes—her light flowing hair—her delicate oval face—the soft outline of her small Grecian nose—her arched eyebrows, some shades darker than her hair—the soft tint of her cheek—her dimpled chin—the slenderness of her throat—the snows of her neck. All these beauties became gradually less and less constantly present to my recollection, in the midst of the college avocations and pursuits to which I subsequently addressed myself. Change of place, change of scene, change of society—how much does it efface impressions once the most deeply stamped on the heart!

At length, after an interval of about six years—after the lapse of that chasm which I have left unsupplied in this narrative, and sub-



sequently to the attainment of my twenty-second year, I once again saw Ellen. She was much grown, and considerably altered: her features had become larger, which, I think, is seldom an improvement; it was none to her. Her complexion I did not think quite so soft and fair as it had previously appeared to me. Still she was very lovely. Her hair had become a good deal darker: perhaps this was an improvement. I felt the sparks of my old flame kindle in my breast; and, alas! I also felt the necessity of extinguishing them as they rose, by the cold and chilling reflection that their encouragement would be in vain. The reversal of my former prospects of independence, will explain all this without farther detail.

I have thus already laid before the reader two bitter instances of disappointment: the one in having my love snatched from me, when the possession of her might have been possible; the other, in being tantalized with having her in my reach, when the possession of her was to be despaired of.

From this moment I bade adieu to all hopes

of calling Ellen my own. My sweetest recollections, I repeat it, have ever reverted to the passion her charms had once inspired. What is the true cause that this *first* passion is so delightful, so superior to any subsequent emotions of a similar nature? I have already declared that the world of Leanders does but rave and talk nonsense, when it swears that the passion consists in purity. It is no such thing: the main secret of its charm consists in its novelty; it is the novelty of the feeling that renders the burning ecstasy of love so delicious; it is because it is new to us, and we do not comprehend it, that we magnify it beyond all just and true bounds, and make such gross mistakes in our idea and definition of it. After a time, when these impulses have been felt once or twice over, we understand their mixed composition a little better than at first; carnal sensations—(I wish to speak plainly, not grossly,)—and not Platonism, is the essential in all passions of love, in the first just as much as in subsequent impulses. There is no wonder in




this ;—man is a composition himself: surely it is reasonable that the principle upon which the prolonging of his race depends, should be of a mixed quality like himself. Nor is it any wonder that he should magnify the nature of a feeling, whose first possession of him must necessarily so much bewilder him. With what a formidable phalanx is his heart at once surprised and stormed !—by hopes and fears, solicitude, tenderness, jealousy, impetuosity, impatience, desire, timidity, delight !

I recollect making a college theme (of which the thesis was, “ *Mens hominum novitatis avida,*”) pursue an exemplification of this sort: this I might have done by way of a joke at that time, for I used to treat most of my college impositions as jokes or nuisances; yet, joke as I might have intended it to be, on account of its absence from all academical gravity, yet it was not the less true. This is my cool and serious declaration, now my youth has long ago withered; and with it too, all its sportiveness, as the dying Emperor says of his soul. Yet

still I am inclined to agree with my old friend Horace, that "one may speak the truth, though it is accompanied by a smile."

The series of disappointments which will be seen subsequently to thicken upon me, are so disagreeable to my recollection, that I willingly pause awhile before I enter upon the labyrinth in which they confounded me.

The recollection of my boyhood, unhappy, as for the most part it was, still does not induce me to alter the opinion which I have previously expressed, relative to the comparative happiness of that portion of the human career. I say this with reference to boyhood in general; but with respect to the boyhood past at school, in particular, there are distinctions to be drawn. When boys have come to a certain degree of strength, and have gained possession for themselves of the fortress of security, and freedom from molestation; then, they are at full liberty to enjoy themselves, and then they will pronounce their time happy. But previously to this hard-earned period, while they are yet weak and subject to drudgery, such as was



exercised towards little boys in my time, they have a lot by no means enviable. These recollections lead me to the mention of matters, which shall form the subject of a separate chapter.

CHAPTER II.

"A DIGRESSION, IN WHICH THE OLD AND NEW
STYLE OF SCHOOLBOY IS CONTRASTED."

My attention being called to a subject so much more interesting to it, I forgot to mention, that when at Bath I used occasionally to ramble about with three or four fine boys, who were like myself, in the full enjoyment of the holidays. Their wild and noisy manner suggests to my mind the following observations.

The old style of schoolboy is as different to the new, as my old grandmother's coal-scuttle bonnet and huge ruffles would be to the gay Leghorns and cuffs of the present day.

The principle upon which schoolboys in my

juvenile days used to act, was that of stuffing themselves most enormously in the holidays, and exercising the most incorrigible mischiefs whilst at school.

Every family used to be agog, just at the approach of the vacation, to hear the mischievous pranks of dear Johnny and his *playmates*, (as they were called,) during the last half-year or quarter at school. The question as to how much he had improved, was not made of nearly so great importance, as that which demanded how many gates he had broken—how many chickens he had “knocked over”—how many tin kettles he had tied to the tails of how many unfortunate mewling cats—how many pigs he had set to swim in a horse-pond—how many terriers he had sent in after them—how many badger-baitings he had witnessed—how many orchards he had robbed—how many Latin Grammars he had burnt at the termination of the period of schooling, in attestation of the glee with which he sung “*Dulce domum*”—how many old women he had terrified with black masks, turnip lanterns, and hollow

groans—how many snobs he had thrashed—how many black eyes and bloody noses he had mutually given and received—and, to sum up the whole, how many floggings he had experienced for these sundry and notable freaks—these redoubted manifestations of spirit and *pickleism*.

Johnny was never tired with gratifying the curiosity of the inquirers; he would go over the tale again and again, with unabated glee, a new vigour, and a louder vociferation. At each clause of the delightful recitation, every body present was bound to laugh; and each showed himself eager to testify his approbation, by cramming *something nice* into the dear Pickle's jaws, in which the powers of perpetual motion were most assuredly developed, in the constant talking and munching, and munching and talking, with which they were alternately engaged.

No other conversation could be relished while Johnny related "how bravely he had *stood up* to farmer Jolt's plough-boy, and how he soused him in the dirty ditch, close by the

farm-yard, after having thrashed him soundly."

..... The chorus of laughter that succeeded this narrative was universal, and the boy was encouraged in being as uproarious and mischievous, as it was possible for him to be.

No jokes were ever listened to with more delight, than those which were made at the expense of the schoolmaster: his love of *good living*, or the rotundity of his proportions; his deep portentous voice was imitated, and his pompous consequential strut and manner put on; and, generally speaking, the representation was good; and though droll, not very much of a caricature.

No less than with the master himself, was his kitchen found fault with, and condemned.

"*Confound* the nasty, under-done mutton, and the '*stick-jaw*' pudding, which is crammed down our throats to take away our appetite for the meat which is to follow. Yes! pudding before meat! . . . *Confound* the old Doctor! I wish he had the pudding crammed down his own throat, every time that he '*jaws*' me, for cribbing apples, confound him!"

This elegant and spirited apostrophe would never fail to elicit peals of laughter all round the table ; on the subsiding of which, a grave discussion would take place upon the vile manner in which boys were uniformly fed at school ; and an exhortation was addressed to Johnny to make the most of his time while at home, while he could get good, well-done, brown, roast beef, and nice hot mince-pies, cakes, custards, and apple-dumplings, to his heart's content.

Meantime, mamma would follow up the exhortation by a practical illustration of its cogency, evinced in the poisoning of a large dessert spoon in a parallel line with Johnny's mouth, and thereby transferring to his jaws a huge piece of sweetmeat. If the dessert was not yet upon the table, Johnny was helped to bursting, for the seventh or eighth time, perhaps to duck, or fowl, or goose, or turkey, as it might happen. " There was only a *leetle* morsel left, and *that* was *nothing* for a fine, strong school-boy, to eat up."

Notwithstanding mamma's assertion, that it



was "*nothing*," this "*leetle morsel*" not infrequently amounted to half a duck, or three-parts of a chicken.

I wonder very much that these indulgent mammas did not manage to kill their boys, by giving them a surfeit; but it seems they did not; and I can only account for it, by concluding that the digestive powers of the old style of schoolboy, habitually acquired a strength, one hundred times greater than that possessed by the digestion of the more moderate schoolboy of the present day.

In further distinction to the cormorant, his predecessor, the modern schoolboy, is, generally speaking, quiet and decorously mannered; never prating, but when he is spoken to; and when he gives an answer, or makes a remark, does not do it in a loud, roaring voice, as if he were in the play-ground at school, bellowing for a wager with his companions.

Inquiry is more particularly addressed to him as to the acquisitions (such as they are) that he has gained at school, than with reference to the sort of pudding he eats, or how


much mischief he has accomplished. In fact I know no instance more characteristic of the comparative uncouthness of the last, and the improved* civilization of the present age, than that which is afforded in the different bearings, tone, air, manner, and disposition of the school-boy of the present and preceding century.

I have been speaking of boys as they are seen at home. As to their conduct at school, it will of course always be mischievous; it is in human nature that youth should be so; but far less vigorous is the reign of mischief in our schools now, than it used to be: there is much less of a most brutal species of mischief, namely, that of bullying, tyrannizing, and domineering over the weaker, by the stronger boys. I recollect, when I was a very little fellow, in my early career at school, (and before I was able to fight my way up it) being nearly hanged twice; that is, being nearly strangled,—hanged I was, but not quite “till I was dead.” At

* I suppose I must allow this, in spite of my grumblings in the “characteristic soliloquy.”—Ch. iii. B. 1.

another time, my back was cut to pieces by laceration, from what were called Westminster Knots—a punishment nearly as bad as the “tympanism” of the ancient Greeks, or the Turkish bastinado, to which it corresponded. This infliction was awarded me by a great boy five times as big and as strong as myself, because I wakened him about ten minutes later than he had directed me to do. Besides being amenable to all these penalties, the “fags” were obliged, in frosty weather, to throw water down in the play-ground over night, that there might be a slide on the following morning; they were necessitated to brush shoes, to say nothing of brushing coats and breeches. Boys, in my time, wore, not trowsers, but those odious inexpressibles—odious by whatever title designated—small-clothes, or breeches.

Again, I remember another punishment—that of being tied to a bench, at about the distance of a yard from the fire, until the wretched little victim was scorched to torture. In truth, the tyranny of public schools of the older date,



was a foretaste of the fiendish torments of Pandemonium.

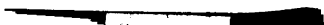
What enrages me is, the reflection that, although this barbarity was notorious, the school-master never paid much attention to it: it was suffered to flourish in all its barbarity, unchecked, unrestrained, unpunished, and therefore encouraged.

Many and many a time have I known little boys go without food, in consequence of some duty or other imposed on them at the hour of meals, by the selfishness and tyranny of their superiors in the school.

The effect of all this brutal treatment would of course be to harden and render savage those upon whom it was exercised, and to make them tyrants in their turn, as tiger-whelps become savage by imbibing the milk of a savage dam. If I pleased, I could dilate very largely on this subject, but I consider that I have said sufficient, and shall add merely, that it is my firm belief, that the wild North-American Indians, with all their ferocity in gouging their enemies



in war, and feasting on their captives, are not, in grain, more capable of cruelty, than the race of schoolboys at the time I called myself one of that number. I may with satisfaction reflect, that the bullying which I suffered myself, as a little boy, had not the effect of making a tyrant of me, when it was *my* turn to domineer.



CHAPTER III.

CONCLUSION OF THE JOURNEY TO SIR
METHUSALEM'S.

A VERY indifferent and outrageously dear breakfast being finished, the horses were ordered to the door, and I was just stepping into the carriage, when a person walked up to me, and accosted me by my name. A little explanation brought to my mind the period at which I had been acquainted with him, and the circumstances of our acquaintance. It would have been quite characteristic in me to have denied myself to this person, especially as he introduced himself to me just at the moment I was about to pursue my journey, which is not

the most seasonable for recognitions of this sort. But the reason that I was willing not to repel his advances towards a renewal of acquaintance, was because he was a man whom in youth I had respected. He had been a college friend of mine, years ago; not one of that profligate description which is justly animadverted on at a later period of this work; but a sober, though a lively and cheerful fellow; always good-humoured and social, but at the same time prudent and sensible.

I was therefore not sorry to recognize him, and was flattered at the sincerity with which he seemed to express his pleasure at meeting with me again, after so long an interval of separation.

The name of Lentulus (I had rather not mention his real name,) brought back to my mind the only term, during my career at college, that I could contemplate with any satisfaction; wilder company separated me from his society subsequently; but still we retained a regard for each other. After I left Oxford, he paid me a short visit, I remember, at the sister University, and this was the last time I had seen him. The

reason that I was at both Universities was, that I thought proper, although I had taken a degree at Oxford, to be admitted "ad eundem" at Cambridge. There was no necessity for this, that I remember; but it was merely done to gratify a whim, for whimsicality was ever my delight.

After talking together a short time in the street, he begged so earnestly that I would accompany him to his rooms at Merton College, and put off my journey for one short day, that I could not resist his request; and accordingly, to the great dissatisfaction of Mrs. Barbara, the horses were ordered back to the stable, and she was left to the solitude of her chamber, while I walked with Lentulus towards his College.

I could not help asking my companion how it was possible, so altered as I must be since we last saw each other, for him to have recollected me. "Surely," I said, "my appearance bears no resemblance to that which it was wont to wear."

"I confess," he replied, "I do not think I should have recognized you, had I not overheard your name in the coffee-room of the inn,



as one of the waiters was telling it to a gentleman who was inquisitive enough to ask it. But let me know what have been the vicissitudes of your life; surely they must have been numerous, to judge from your disposition, and I should not say of the most agreeable nature, if I might guess by your countenance!"

"Ay," I answered, "a man's countenance is a good index of his fortunes; mine have been untoward in my time, though I believe, in candour, many of the grievances of which I have to complain, were brought on by myself."

In the course of the day, I gratified his curiosity by giving him an outline of the various incidents and circumstances of my life, all which will be more fully unfolded in this work in due time; and, in my turn, made some inquiries as to his own condition since I had known him.

"Your views," I observed, "if I recollect right, were directed to the army at one time, were they not?"

"Yes, I was wavering between the law and the army; my ambition urging me to the first, and my love of enterprize to the last. I did

not know on which to fix for a long time; so I thought I would try both."

"Of course you tried the law first? I can easily anticipate what you are about to tell me."

"What!—that I was tired of the dryness of the toil: why yes, I was tired of it, and partly for that reason; but I found the confinement was too much for my health; so I went into the army, and was taken prisoner for some little time."

"Indeed! where was the quarter of your captivity?"

"It was in France, not far from Bourdeaux, and a pleasanter time I never passed in my life: the officer, under whose superintendence I was placed, was a remarkably amiable good sort of person."

"It seems that you fell into good hands: pray what was the officer's name?"

"Gérard. . . ."

"Gérard!" I exclaimed.

"The same."

"That name is most dear to me—but tell

me, how long were you a prisoner? Have you heard any thing of Gérard since?"

"I was but a short time detained: all the circumstances of my detention and liberation it is needless to mention.—I regretted to learn that Gérard met his death in battle some few years afterwards: but what makes you ask the question with so much interest?"

"I have reason, indeed, to do so. Had this Gérard—do you know—a wife?"

"Yes, he had once possessed one; but she had, when I was prisoner, been dead some years: he used to speak of her with great regret; and was ever lamenting that she had not survived him, rather than that he had out-lived her. He was getting old then.—Oh! I remember now, this was the woman you used to speak of sometimes at college."

"She was an excellent woman, indeed, and deserved to be spoken of with fondness. It is melancholy to think what shadows we human beings are.—I was but a little time ago reading a memoir I had written, in which I have spoken

of this person as in the prime of life, gay and beautiful, whose death you have been but now relating to me."

The mention of this memoir led to various questions on the part of my friend, and brought to his recollection an intimation, which it seems I had once thrown out to him, when at college, that I would one day write the various adventures of my life. This induced him to ask me if I had ever fulfilled my intention; and, as one thing leads to another, I at length promised to read him what I had been writing, relative to my own career.

"But you have never told me," I said, "how you managed to turn academician for life after your legal and military trials: how was that?"

"Why, on my return to England after my liberation, I happened to come to Oxford for a week or two, to talk over old days with a friend at this college, and was so much charmed with its prettiness, and the agreeable persons in it, that I expressed a strong wish to be a member of the Society. You may suppose then, that I was most agreeably surprised at receiving, a

month or two afterwards, a letter from my friend, informing me that the Fellows had elected me into their number. This favour, which I owed to mere interest, could not have been conferred on me by the society of any other college in Oxford. We are not particular here about being all of one cloth; we put up a chequered sign, and are not pledged to the uniform insignia of the gown and cassock."

A rapping at the door was succeeded by the entrance of three or four of the society; their presence was quite sufficient to drive me away. I shook hands with my friend, promising I would call on him again in the evening, intimating that I hoped he would be at home to nobody but myself.

When I got back to the inn, I found poor Barbara so distressed at the delay, so impatient to break through it; so full of suggestions that it might rain to-morrow, and that it was better to take advantage of the fine weather, with numerous other cogent reasons for departure, that I was willing to listen to her complaints; and, accordingly, ordered the car-

riage to be ready again in an hour's time; meanwhile I took my MSS. to my Merton friend, and making the excuse that I found myself obliged to continue my journey that day, I left it with him for his perusal, under promise of inviolable secrecy, telling him I would take it again in my way back, which should be through Oxford.

He did not see me go without much regret at my not stopping to dine, and pass the evening with him; this pleasure, I said, I hoped to have when I next saw him: squeezing my hand, he wished me well on my journey, and said some civil things about the restoration of my health. Scarcely half an hour more had elapsed before myself and Barbara were again on our route.


We were no sooner out of Oxford, than my bodings of mischief returned; and again did I admonish Mrs. Busby, that all the ill that had happened was her fault; that whatever more we sustained would be equally so, and that I should never cease repenting having left my own door.

We had now completed the greater part of our expedition; which was not very long, without any adventure or mishap whatever; and I was beginning to hope that my prognostications of evil were cherished without reason, when all on a sudden, one of the horses began kicking and plunging, bolting first on one side of the road, and then on the other, till at last he overset the carriage against a bank, and lay kicking in a manner that made me expect he would drive his leg through the front of the carriage: however he did not. In the concussion, Mrs. Busby was tossed upon me, drove my head through the window, and cut it—not very much, as it fortunately happened; but the alarm was terrible. Still worse than all, the thermometer, which was in the side-pocket against which I fell, was smashed to pieces. Some rustics, who came by, lent their aid in rescuing us from our predicament; poor Barbara was taken out of the carriage nearly fainting; I was in a condition very little less helpless, the weight of Mrs. Busby's person having nearly squeezed the breath out of my body.

The bare thought of the plight we were in, set my nerves quivering; and many are the blots which at this moment disfigure the page as I write.

The traces had been loosened, and the refractory horse removed. An offer was made by the postilion of taking us on with the other horse; but I did not like driving up to Sir Methusalem's door with one horse; so I determined to be taken up by one of the coaches that should pass that way, by which I could be set down at the park-gate, from whence it was my intention to crawl on foot to the house. At the same time I ordered the postilion to go on with the carriage and my effects in it.

We rested against a milestone, in expectation of a coach: one soon passed by, but it was full; and the coachman only answered Mrs. Barbara's scream of interrogation by a dry nod and a malicious grin. So we were forced to stand ankle deep in the mud for a full half-hour or more, I cursing my existence, and accusing my housekeeper, and she lamenting that we had been so unfortunate. Nor did Sir



Methusalem escape without maledictions; he shared them pretty plentifully with the refractory beast that had upset us. The sound of a horn at length announced the approach of another stage; it came up to us; it stopped; happily it was not full. I was first assisted into it, and then Mrs. Busby took her seat next to me.

I had not been seated above ten minutes before my nostrils were assailed by an odour, savouring diabolically of onion. This was occasioned by the opening of a filthy, greasy-looking workbag, by a spinster of the name of Miss Jenkins, (who sat opposite me), for the purpose of seeking some *refreshment*, as she called it, in the shape of portions of an anatomized goose, roasted and cold. Brandy, too, had she in a green half-pint phial, to wash down the odious nutriment she was about to devour. With all imaginable politeness she begged to know if I would "*take*" a little: this offer nearly turned my stomach. Mrs. Busby, feeling hungry, I suppose, was not inclined to be so fastidious, and nothing but a horrid frown from me, of mingled

indignation and disgust, could have restrained her from partaking of the offensive viands offered her. As for me, I stuffed my nostrils full of snuff, and sat with my head poked half way out of the window.

Fortunate was it for me that my journey was now nearly at a close, or I should infallibly have been poisoned; for scarcely had the nasty Miss Jenkins devoured half the leg of a goose, before the remaining vacant place in the coach was filled by a grazier, who entered it to mingle the stench of cow-dung and tobacco, with the fumes of Miss Jenkins's luncheon.

Thank Heaven! we were soon at Sir Methusalem's park gate: by way of some little consolation, I found my carriage ready to receive me, with a horse which had been supplied from the baronet's stables. This was civil enough; indeed I required something to pacify me, so irritated was I with the series of annoyances to which I had been subjected.

CHAPTER IV.

VISIT AT SIR METHUSALEM GOOSEWIT'S.

THE reader will remember that I was not much prepossessed in favour of my host. On entering the hall, Sir Methusalem met me himself, with the following strange salutation. "Hey—old—cock!—what—you're—come—at last,—are you?—glad—to—see—you;—glad—to—see—you."

He used to speak in this dotted sort of way, pausing between each word, which he clucked out with an air of the most ridiculous importance; when he spoke, he always shut his eyes. I must just give a sketch of his character and appearance. The first was that of a meddling, inquisitive, officious impertinence; nor less than

this, was the excessive conceit of the man. The mere object of his wishing to become acquainted with myself, was a curiosity to pry into my singularities: this was the only reason that had instigated him to ask me down to his house. His lady was nearly as curious a person as himself, and had no doubt entertained a desire to see me, from hearing a description from her asinine lord, of the "strange—old—cock—he—had—met—with—at—the—club." My lady Goosewit was remarkable for silliness; for vapid, senseless observations: as much so as her husband was for conceit.

The odd mode of address with which I have characterized the baronet, was the only one which he ever applied to any one who bore about him the stamp of the old fashion. He used to speak of himself in the same terms. I rather think he was inclined to like me as an oddity; for he affected oddity himself. His dress consisted generally of nankeen smallclothes, and coloured silk stockings; and a coat with skirts preposterously long, nearly reaching down to his heels: he wore also huge lace ruffles to the

Wristbands of his shirt-sleeves; and when he went abroad, covered his head with a shallow-crowned hat like my own. What hair remained on his head was powdered; a portentous pig-tail dangled down his back; his nose was long and pointed, and turned all on one side of his face; his complexion was ruddy; his attitude horrid—he always hunched up his shoulders, or poked his head forward, or stooped excessively. Her ladyship was no beauty either: her voice was squeaking, and she spoke with a silly drawl. She had a sort of piebald complexion; her nose was very red, and her cheeks very green. When the weather was at all cold, her cheeks assumed a blueish tint, and her nose became bluer still.

“Oh! so delighted to see you, Mr.—; thought you would never come. Dear me! when could you have left town? surely our letter arrived at your house more than three days ago!”

This was the first speech she made me after our introduction. I was next introduced to four elderly maiden ladies, sisters of Sir Methusalem, and as much admired by him on

account of their starch, stiff appearance, as the figures of the Elizabethan age, in portraits by Vandyke, or Cornelius Jansen, are by antiquaries.

The youngest of these ladies, who was turned fifty-eight, possessed a monkey, which had been made her a present by an East India captain. This monkey was no less a favourite with Sir Methusalem than he was with his old sisters, and the tricks of the animal formed the grand topic of conversation during dinner.

Sir Methusalem remarked to me—"You—love—monkeys,—I know ; now—don't you ? The—mischievous—beast—savours—of—the—old—day : all—your — long—waisted — queans — of—old—times—used—to—be—accompanied — by—a—monkey. Sister—Willy—does—well — to—have — the — beast : he — has — not—done—much—mischief,—has—he—Willy ? not — broken—much—*chainy*—since — he—has — been—here ?"

"No brother—Thusalem," answered Miss Willy, in a voice as gruff as a turnkey's ; " he has only broken the four large green china

vases, that stand under the ilex tree on the lawn; that is but trifling, considering the mischief these creatures generally do."

"Oh dear, dear!" observed her ladyship, "do you think now that is trifling? I think it is a good deal, Willy; when you recollect how *very*—very—much these vases cost."

"Yes, yes," answered Willy, "but I said it was trifling, considering the great damage these creatures frequently do."

"Now, dear me, so it is: I remember before I was married, a young man with whom I danced once, telling me a story of a baboon that broke a whole cupboard-full of china, and then when they tried to catch him, in order to beat him, he jumped through the panes of a green-house and did many hundred pounds damage. Oh dear! what mischievous beasts they are!—your's is so *very* well behaved!"

"I rather think," I observed, "that it was I who told that anecdote to your ladyship many years ago; and, consequently, I must have had the honour of being your partner; though I did not recollect the circumstance till

you brought it to my mind by the mention of that anecdote."

"Oh, now, dear me! how pleasant these recollections are: I remember the evening so well! it was about the year eighty-five, wasn't it? Oh, dear! how changed we are. I'm so glad I happened to mention the anecdote: how very odd, to meet again after so many years!"

"Ay," said Sir Methusalem, "Mr. — must be better acquainted with us:" then turning to me, he continued, "I find you are an old friend of Amelia's, hey? old cock!"*

"I'm sure," I replied, "I shall be happy the acquaintance should become better."

"Why, I remember being at that dance myself," growled out another of the old maiden ladies—"and now I recollect the name of Mr. — well. I think he danced with *me* too."

"I dare say I might have had that honour," I answered; "but it is now so long ago, that it

* We shall not continue our *typographical* marks of Sir Methusalem's hop-step-and-jump mode of delivery. The reader can better imagine it.

would be difficult for me to recollect all the ladies with whom I had danced in my youth."

"Are you not glad, old cock, to meet with your old partners: I dare say you danced with Willy and Jemmy too? I used to love dancing myself. Lord! how I did enjoy it!"

I should observe that Willy and Jemmy were abbreviations of the names Wilhelmina and Jemima.

Of these, the fairest was Willy: Jemima, with whom, it appears, I once had the honour of dancing, was rendered formidable by a vast red beard, which had been accumulating upon her chin and over her upper lip for some years. The two other sisters were no beauties: the name of the eldest of the four was Theodosia, and of the second, Seraphina. I forgot to mention, that the only one of them that had any teeth left, was Willy. They were all pale, and had hideously long noses.

Dinner was scarcely over before a great clatter in the hall announced the arrival of Sir Methusalem's grandson and heir, from Oxford.

In the features of this hopeful youth, when he made his entry into the dining-room, I recognized those of the drunken gowmsman who had made such a boisterous irruption into Mrs. Busby's bed-room on the preceding night.

"Ah, my dear boy, I'm glad to see you:—here, my old cock," said he, turning to me, "here is my grandson; he takes to his learning hugely; and is come from Oxford crammed with Greek and the sciences, eh? Peter, eh?"

"Oh, dear! Peter," said her ladyship, "how pale you look! I'm sure you read yourself to death: *do* take care of your health. They give them too much to do, Mr. —, at the University."

Peter laughed, and said he was afraid they did; and swallowing down two or three glasses of wine, asked Willy after the monkey, and withdrew with the ladies for the purpose of showing them a new collar which he had bought for the creature, with Miss Willy's initials engraved on brass thereon; so that my host and myself were left to ourselves.

"Well, what sort of a journey had you, Mr. ———?"

"Why, a very bad one: odious! was upset, as you have heard, I dare say, and had a thousand annoyances besides."

"Ay, ay; one must expect these little inconveniences now and then: but what will one not undergo for the sake of seeing one's friends? here you have myself and my amiable family.

I was so enraged with the conceit of my host, that I scarcely knew how to answer him; and therefore acquiesced with a sardonic grin, in what he said: he continued in the same strain.

"Well, my old cock, how long have ye been a member of our club? devilish good dinners, eh? good, good! ay; you know where to go for good things; so do I: pleasant society? hey!"

"Vastly agreeable, indeed!" said I ironically.

"I forget how long I have been a member of the club; pray, do *you* find the society so very pleasant?—I cannot say that *I* do."

"What, what, old cock! not find the society pleasant? why there 's myself. What would you have?"

"Oh certainly *yourself*! wonderfully pleasant, without a doubt: but I always except persons present."

"Ay, ay, everybody likes *me*: there's a something about me that people admire. Bless you! there never was a soul that knew me who did not love me: so do you, I'm sure: and you don't seem to like everybody."

"No indeed I do not, I assure you!" I interrupted....

"Well, that's just the reason I was determined you should like *me*. I saw that you did not keep company with most people; and therefore I had a mind you should with *me*. How do you like that wine, my old cock?"

"Very good, very fine wine; upon my word, very fine!"

"Ay, you don't get better at our club, I'm certain. Trust me, that is the best in

England. What wine do you generally drink ?

—I think I have heard you call for claret at the club ?”

“ I dare say you have, Sir Methusalem ; I prefer it to almost any other wine, for constant drinking.”

“ I admire your taste, indeed do I : it agrees with my own, and that I flatter myself is a good one. I say, my old cock, I just want to ask you who that female is that came with you here ? that Mrs. Barbara Busby, as they call her (I asked her name)—do you style her your Mistress, old boy ;—or what is she ?”

“ Zounds ! Sir Methusalem, I am not bound to answer such inquiries as these. This Mrs. Busby is a serviceable domestic, who, from having lived with me some years, has become so well acquainted with my peculiar habits, that I could not do without her assistance. I much regret that she has left me this evening to go on to Gloucester to see her friends. I don't know what I shall do without her, I'm sure.”

“ Well, old cock ! I didn't wish to offend you. If she *had* been your mistress, there is

no great harm in it; that is according to the opinion of this vastly sinful world."

I was beginning to get very fidgetty at my host's impertinence, when it was cut short by the servant coming to tell us that coffee had been taken into the drawing-room: so we rose to join the ladies.

The moment I entered the room, my eye glanced upon the figure of Miss Willy's pet: he was frisking about from the lap of one of the ladies to that of the other. The beast was cunning enough to see I did not admire him so much as they did, and was soon constituted my foe, especially as I removed him with my foot, on his coming too close to me. This made him grin and chatter, and moo so, that I was apprehensive he would fly at me. And so he did; and at the most inconvenient time; for no sooner was I seated down to sip my coffee, when this odious ape, starting on my lap, seized hold of my frill, (a portentous shirt frill that I wear,) with his teeth and claws, and tugging it with all his force, pulled me forward sprawling on my nose, with my chair over me: down went the coffee.

cup, and was smashed to atoms; its contents having stained my breeches and waistcoat all over.

The vile ape did not escape with impunity, for I fell with my knee on his neck, which pretty nearly killed him: this was fortunate, for if I had fallen on any other part of his body, I should have been bitten over and over again.

The servants raised me up, amid the unrestrained laughter of the whole party, especially of the varlet from Oxford.

Miss Willy seized up her pet in dismay; none asked about myself with a quarter the concern which they manifested about the monkey. I was overwhelmed with rage and confusion. Besides this, I was exceedingly hurt and shaken. My rage was heightened by the cool impudent manner in which that ass, Sir Methusalem, treated my mishap.

"What, has your tumble hurt you, old cock? ah! poor Jacko; you're not used to strangers, are you?"

"No! poor devil!" cried the Oxoni-

“No! pretty thing!” said her ladyship.

“No! dear creature!” grunted Willy.

“No! darling ape!” growled the whole chorus of old maids.

“These things,” resumed their brother, “*will* happen, sometimes: I once had a fall myself; it was across a pig! Lord! how the hog did squeak! *Your* fall was more singular, as it was over a monkey: your trowsers are all stained too: that’s a pity.”

“Dear! dear! so they are!” observed her ladyship; “that is sad!”

I could no longer support such treatment as this; so I instantly withdrew to my room, bidding one of the servants show me the way up-stairs.

As I went out of the room, Lady Goosewit drawled out—

“Good night, Mr. —: so distressed at your accident;—hope it will not spoil your sleep;—hope you’ll suffer no inconvenience;—dear! dear! so sorry.”

To stay another day in the house with

so disagreeable a set of people, and with the chance of another encounter with the hateful ape, was out of the question; so I ordered that my carriage should be ready at as early an hour the next morning, as it was possible for me to quit the house.

In my bedroom, I met with new miseries. I was unable to sleep at all; independently of the agitation occasioned by my fall, a multiplicity of causes conspired to vex me. In the first place, the house was strange, and the room was strange, and was placed at the end of a long scrambling gallery; then the mattress was not put above the featherbed, which is always a cause of sleeplessness and distress to me.

In the morning, the servant, when he had brushed my clothes, did not lay them on the chair in the order in which I put them on, and always like them placed; then he only fetched me *one* jug of hot water instead of *two*. The bell did not allow itself to be pulled properly, on account of the wire being twisted out of the straight line. The chimney too, smoked a

little. I also found a cat with three kittens under the bed, which I had much ado to get out of the room. When I tried to bolt the door, I could not do so; the bolt was out of order, and there was no key in the lock; and I was in a state of perpetual fear, lest some one or other should make a mistake, and poke his head into the room whilst I was dressing. Or what was worse, lest the vile monkey, my foe, might pay me a visit.

In fact, I was perfectly miserable. My condition might have been alleviated in some measure, had Barbara been in the way to assist me; but without her, I was in a little better condition than Philoctetes, or Alexander Selkirk, when deserted on a barren island.

At eight o'clock the next morning, an hour before the family breakfast, I went off, without leaving any message of excuse whatever, for my abrupt departure, and heartily glad to fly from such unpleasant quarters.

My course was directed towards Bath; in passing through Gloucester, I stopped at the inn, and dispatched a message to Mrs. Busby, (who

had informed me where to send for her,) that I was in the town; and my wish that she should rejoin me on my journey. I recounted to her all my grievances, on her arrival; and had much difficulty in conceding to her wishes, that she might be permitted to stay one day at Gloucester, to see a little more of her friends before she quitted them. At last, I acquiesced in her request, and spent the morning in sauntering about the town, and in looking at the cathedral. During the rest of the day, I sat meditating at the inn till dinner-time. The subject of these meditations I subsequently reduced into writing, in the following shape.

CHAPTER V.

(Confessions resumed.)

FURTHER DISAPPOINTMENTS.

To proceed with my disappointments, from those I experienced in love, to those which befel me in other respects,—at college—on entering into the world—and in the career of my profession. (Of course, in speaking of college, I only go so far as to point out any *individual* causes which have *combined* to bring about the general result displayed in my present condition.)

There are some persons who are fond of saying that it is a good thing for young men to



meet with repulses ; that it only urges them to be more earnest in their exertions in future ; and consequently, more entitled to hope for ultimate success.

This may perhaps be the general case ; but it was far from being so with me. The examples of the great, the good, the wise, had all inspired me with an early ambition to gain distinction in life, if I could. In my little sphere, I was ambitious for such distinctions as the field of college exertions held out to me. I had some talent, and was conscious of it ; and felt that I had as much right as others to be ambitious.

The first opportunity that presented itself of gaining distinction, was that of a prize for verse—Latin verse, I remember. At school I had been so idle, that I had never troubled myself with practising the composition of Latin verse ; I was therefore, as may be supposed, but an indifferent hand at framing an hexameter. I felt this, and I felt aware that if I did not succeed in the competition, there would be nothing surprising in my ill-success. No imputa-

tion would attach to my ability, though a good deal to my original neglect, and also to my rashness, in pretending to handle weapons of which I did not know the management.

Nevertheless, with all these prudent objections to deter me, I determined I would become a competitor: the path to distinction, however trifling, was open before me, and I was resolved upon the endeavour to set foot on it. I recollected that at school, however idle I had systematically been, yet whenever I roused up my energies, I was sure to obtain as much praise as any one else. Accordingly I set to work upon my subject; (I forget the thesis)—My tutor, like a fool, as he was, told me I was certain of being successful. The truth is, the man was afraid of me; I could bully him, talk him over, laugh at him before his face, and impose on him as I pleased; so that he always sought an opportunity of currying favour with me by flattery.

The day soon arrived when the successful candidate's name was announced: I need not say, that name was not mine. The degrada-

tion, the humiliation, which, for a moment, I felt, I will not describe; but this feeling lasted but for a moment; my native and habitual pride soon rose above it: to it, succeeded indignation, scorn, and a spirit of revenge. My luckless tutor was my first victim. I upbraided him bitterly for misleading me as to my claims upon success: I even menaced his own and the peace of the College—nay of the whole University.

The suggestion he ventured to offer me, of a second competition, with a chance of being more successful in it than my first, irritated and enraged me more and more. "No!" said I, "never! To be once beaten, is quite sufficient to deter me from the chance of being vanquished again, where my acquirements do not put me on a level with others; I am surprised, Sir, at your admonitions!"

As to a course of close application to ensure my success the ensuing year, the idea was totally repugnant to my notions of a liberal and generous exercise of talent; there was something servile and horrid in the circumstance of

drudging for twelve months at prosody and Virgil, with, after all, an uncertain prospect of being rewarded for my pains.

Again my worthy tutor, in order to pacify me, suggested that my copy was as good, or better, perhaps, than that of the successful candidate. This proposition enraged me no less than that which he had already made. "No!" I again exclaimed, with impatience, "I am not fool enough to think so. Do not mislead yourself, Sir, so much as to suppose I am such an ass—so deluded and stupid as to cherish any such erroneous idea. I willingly believe I was *fairly* beaten. But what irritates me is, the fact altogether, of being *beaten*. I am enraged that my exercise was not the best."

This piece of disappointment so stung me, that it completely resolved me never to make any further attempt at the attainment of college distinction. Why do I call it disappointment? It ought not to have been so; it was a check, at any rate, on my ambition, which was in its nature much the same. Still this ambition of mine, and vanity, demanded distinction in some way or other, and

it was amply rewarded.—For a spirit of opposition, for a strange mixture of talent, and misapplication of it; of natural amiability, and adscititious perverseness, there never was a more notorious instance, in any public institution of education, than in my character at college. In a word, I became unfixed in principle, unsteady in action, except where mischief was in view; despairing of success in life, envious of the success of others, jealous of the approbation bestowed on them, desponding as to all I undertook; consequently, persevering in nothing I commenced. Fretful, dejected, giving way to violent impulses, luxuriating in wild and impetuous emotions, sneering at patient toil and persevering industry, and scorning the rewards it earned. Ever irritated by a sense of wrong brought on myself, ever taunted by self-reproach; not unfrequently goaded by a sense of shame, and, no less often, turning from it with disdain, regarding it with defiance, or crushing it by opposition.*

* In vain.—“Ah! shake not thou thy gory locks at me,” says the conscience-stricken Macbeth, to the ghost of his murdered victim.

My college career was at an end a few months after my attainment of the age of twenty. My circumstances at this crisis rendered the choice of a profession necessary. My ambition, since such was the case, would brook the idea of nothing less than the pursuit of the law: yet my wishes were not directed to a lot of so much toil; they led me to seek renown in literary pursuits of a less laborious and more captivating nature: for I am but doing myself justice to say, that my proficiency in English literature, either in poetry or prose, is not to be estimated by that which I possessed in the fabrication of Latin hexameter. But it was destined that I should not be permitted to indulge the bent of my genius. This compulsory abandonment of studies, for which I had a natural liking, was an endless source of secret discontent and regret to me. A literary renown, especially in the department of poetry, I considered earned with infinitely less trouble than that of an archbishop or a chancellor; while the reputation was much more dazzling. The memory of the historian or poet can boast of immortality, when that of

the others has long slept with them in the tomb.

To the law, however, I went. I did not dislike it, although I might have had a greater taste for other pursuits: it was an honourable occupation, it was a noble science; and the pursuit of it did not preclude him who embraced it from the enjoyment of any collateral advantages, should they chance to offer themselves, from which other professions might exclude him.

I began the profession agreeably enough; I delighted in argument, in raillery, in elocution; and all this intellectual sparring was fully indulged in, in the society of youthful disputants, into which I was thrown. I remember well in the dinner-hall, a knot of us used to amuse ourselves with the appearance of the present Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, then a student at law: for a young man he certainly was a most marvellous *quix*. He used, I remember, to wear a three-cornered hat, which was an endless subject of entertainment.


We used to have long debates whether he

would ever be called upon to wear that solemn countenance of his on the bench, or not; what were his capacities, and how he would turn out. Our arguments always concluded in his favour, though against our inclination; for nothing is more odious than to see young men in professions look so over solemn, as if they were bishops or chancellors by anticipation. It is Gay, I think, who says

“ Shall grave and solemn pass for wise ? ”

That our arguments were not wrong in their conclusion, the career of the Chief Justice Abbot has amply and honourably shown. I always wished him well myself; always argued on the side of his success; and, envious and crabbed as I am, have ever been pleased to witness his elevation. If I were not totally indifferent to every event in this world, I should hope to see him raised to the peerage before I die.

Necessity makes men do what otherwise they would never bring themselves to attempt. What person was now more studious than myself? more



steady, more anxious, more regular, more persevering, and more ardent in toil, than the quondam, idle, indolent, careless, impatient, restless, turbulent, and dissipated ———? No one. I am confident no student at law ever laboured more closely or more zealously than I did.

Besides attending to my legal pursuits, I was anxious to figure in diurnals and magazines; at first, perhaps, as much from a love of seeing myself in print, as from a desire of obtaining some emolument. The first of these feelings soon wore off, and I grew as sick of seeing my own scribblings in print as I had before felt flattered by it. As to the second, it was gratified but poorly; I gained very scanty rewards for my labours. The magazines were then few, nothing equal in the extent to which they have since increased: what few there were, were monopolized by a limited set of writers, who for the most part rejected, (as, no doubt, the conductors of these periodicals now do,) all articles sent them by strangers, for fear of a demand for remuneration from the contributors

of them. Some articles of considerable merit, which I remember contributing, were rejected; this sadly disgusted me: now and then, indeed, I managed to turn them to some useful account. As to my gratuitous offerings, they were invariably seized and printed in the foremost ranks of the periodical salmagundi.

But in a condition of straightened circumstances, a trifling compliment to my vanity was not a sufficient consolation for my distresses: necessity told me I could not live by this. I was therefore taught to forget altogether what the gratification of vanity was: the "main chance," as it is vulgarly called, was all that I was now obliged to keep in view.

My mind being given up to divided pursuits, to law and literature, sustained a considerable charge upon it: for in the attainment of so wide and so difficult a science as law, every moment devoted to literature was so much time thrown away, as far as related to the pursuit of my profession. After a sufficient knowledge of legal lore has been acquired, a man is somewhat

better able to afford a portion of his time to other pursuits.

My health and spirits were both jaded and broken down; my look was as cadaverous as my heart was heavy: periodical and all other literature was rejected, and my attention turned solely to law, as my last and only resource.

It takes a vast deal of resolution and discipline to crush those feelings which are naturally implanted in our composition. It required a much greater degree of vulgarity, coarseness, and insensibility, to combat with all the trying and painfully degrading situations, which the law imposes upon its votaries, than were possessed by me. Every thing in the *practice* of the law was a subject of disgust to me; my sensibility shrunk with abhorrence at the idea of being indebted for employment and subsistence to persons whom I despised as nearly the most vulgar of the human race; while, at the same time, I was willing to admit that they were necessary evils.

The licentiousness of the bar itself disgusted me; the rudeness of language, the coarseness

of manner, with which the forensic wrangles were conducted, appeared to me little less than brutal. All these susceptibilities were dreadfully against my chance of succeeding in a profession replete with so many causes of disgust. The mere bundles of papers and parchments, tied up with dusky red tape, were viewed by my eyes with repugnance. Habit stifled in some measure these antipathies, but it never could totally extinguish them. Never shall I forget the constraint I imposed on myself, on my first being ushered into the office of a Chancery barrister, to learn the technicalities of my profession. These were to be acquired by scribbling and grubbing at a desk—wills and deeds of all descriptions—bills and answers, pleas, demurrers, and petitions—telling long histories about vulgar wretches, and their stupid complaints, or their trumpery legacies; the perusal of which was loathsome to me. The name of one John Dowbiggin, a leather-seller of Liverpool, being repeated about a thousand times in a will of the said J. D.—(“whereby,” he bequeathed his stock in trade, and all his

musty nasty goods and chattels to such and such persons)—vexed and disgusted me so bitterly, that I flung the parchment down, and, together with it, the pen with which I was copying his cursed cognomen, and hurried out of the office, to give vent to my disgust and irritation in useless lamentation. Of this I was soon ashamed; I returned to my desk, and resumed my seat on a stool, of about five feet perpendicular, amidst a bevy of lantern-jawed, pale-faced, unhealthy, sickly creatures, called clerks, dressed in pepper-and-salt trowsers, worn out at the knees, and in rusty black coats, equally perforated at the elbows; their fingers besmeared with ink, nearly hump-backed, or chicken-breasted, from perpetually stooping over the desk. Heavens! what an ordeal of drudgery and confinement for one whose spirit delighted in independence; what a penance upon me to be buried alive in such a prison-house, and with such co-mates! I bore all this mortification with amazing fortitude; my sense of duty supported me in the trial, my necessity also. I was in due time called to the bar;

my fortitude still supported me in putting up with much ill-humour, much contradiction, much bantering, much malice, much spleen ; all so painful, so galling to a young man ; but to one with a soul as tremblingly alive to every touch of rudeness, as the sensitive plant is to that of the finger,—what a condition of positive torment ! Make what efforts I could to summon up courage to cheat myself, if possible, into vulgarity and unamiability, it was of no avail. Nature got the better of me at last ; and after I had been a circuit or two, I was obliged to give up the contest. I did it, not without a severe pang. It tortured me to think that I was driven to abandon the path which my ambition had led me to pursue—the noble path to wealth, to renown, and honour. But leave it I did ; I quitted it for the insignificant consideration of a situation of a trifling, though respectable character, in one of the colonies. An advertisement in the paper caught my eye one morning, at the close of a scanty breakfast, just as I was execrating the

necessity of a recurrence of the daily scene of my disgusts.

Instantly I flung down upon the floor my wig, which I had begun adjusting on my head, and kicking it to the other side of the room, I thrust my hat upon my head, and hurried forth in quest of the A. B. or X. Y. Z., to whom the advertisement directed me. The step was soon taken, the engagement soon concluded, the ship soon sailed, that was to convey me to the shores of my destination. The hour that snatched me forward on my new pursuit, drew a veil for ever over the bright dreams of my ambition ; it shut out from me every hope of being a distinguished member of society, an honour to my family and to myself ; it consigned my heart, to the end of existence, to remorse ; the vulture, which has preyed on it with its beak, and lacerated it with its talons !

CHAPTER VI.

THOUGHTS TOWARDS MATRIMONY.

It may be supposed, that with so much time as I now had for reflection on the step I had taken, I should frequently accuse myself for not having pursued my profession through every discouragement and in spite of every disgust. Yet when I considered the materials of which I was, unhappily for myself, composed; when I called to mind the many degradations from which I had escaped, I could not help feeling reconciled to my late resolution. By turns I was satisfied and dissatisfied with myself; nor can I tell to this moment whether I was most deserving of blame or excuse. Generally speak-

ing I have been always more willing to find fault with myself, than to exculpate my conduct—an invariable characteristic with all who are cursed with the sensitiveness which has been my severest bane.

My stay abroad was suddenly cut short by the intelligence of an independence, (barely an independence indeed,) having been left me by an old gentleman, who had taken a liking to me some time before my departure from England, on the occasion of a conversation I had with him at a ball, at which I danced with his daughters, and took all opportunities of showing them attentions.

These little civilities are not, sometimes, without their effect ; such was the case in my own instance, when, Heaven knows ! I least dreamed of such an event. Let not this remark be the occasion of any of my youthful readers being attentive to their elders with sordid views. I would willingly cancel the mention of any incident in my history, that would be attended with such an effect.

Having, on this small acquisition of fortune,

abandoned any positive occupation, my mind restlessly sought something whereon to employ itself. If I had been discontented before on account of my state of dependance, I was far from being contented, now that I had an independence. My wish was to make some footing and figure in society, but the extent of my means did not answer that of my inclinations.

Discontent seldom troubles men of common minds ; at least not in the same degree as it does those of more exalted capacities and more exquisite sensibilities. The ordinary, practical man, has a limited number of feelings, a few staple ideas, which is the sum of all that he ever entertains ; he pursues a straight-beaten path, and nothing has power to turn aside his attention, either to the right or to the left.

The condition of a man of happily gross composition like this, knows not the torment that his fellow-creature, of more refined sensibilities, endures. If he is discontented, the cause of it, is moroseness—unnatural, coarse, moroseness. The discontent that *I* harboured, was not engendered by any such cause. My sen-

sibilities were the source from whence all my disgusts and fretfulness arose. That I have become morose, I am willing to confess, by long brooding over the various annoyances of my life ; but I cannot accuse myself of having been so by nature.

The solitude to which I was in great measure condemned at present, as well as the want of occupation, induced me to think of matrimony. To support a wife on what income I had was impossible ; but should the lady contribute a tolerable addition to it, on her part, the measure was not to be despaired of. In fact, I began seriously to entertain thoughts of taking on myself the respectable, social, and dignified title of husband.

How amiably, to be sure, I talk ! I ought to say, that I was foolish enough to think of putting my neck under the matrimonial yoke, of wedding myself to a long amount of domestic annoyances, to brats and nursemaids, for life ; to a multitude of tradesmen of all descriptions, and apothecaries, till my dying day ; with the prospect of having to bring up, perhaps, three or

four wayward, disobedient urchins of boys, to be as miserable as myself, and as many daughters, to be a burden on my hands, more and more heavy every succeeding year, as the chance of their being disposed of in marriage became less.

Why do not people think a little, before they enter on so hazardous a step? To what anxieties do they link themselves! What responsibility do they take upon them! What a long waste of care do they plunge into! I fancied some one interrupted me just then, and asked, if the companionship of an attached, sincere, and loving friend; if the tenderness and anxiety of one constant heart, when there is none other in the world that has sympathies for us; if the fidelity of one, who would undergo all difficulties, and encounter all dangers to serve us; whose soul is one with ours; whose wishes exist but to agree with our own; whose countenance derives delight as ours is animated; whose tears fall with ours; whose smile glows as our own is awakened; whose bosom is the

depository of our woes ; whose voice breathes *our* consolation ; whose kindness is ever ready, with its gentle admonition, to warn us from the dangerous impulses of impatience, anger, or disappointed pride ; who makes up to us by her blandishments, what the envious niggardly world denies to our merits ; who praises us when none else will ; who comforts us when all beside mock at us ; who soothes us, when all reject us ; who raises us up, when man tramples on us I say, I fancied somebody asked me, that if all this support, consolation, and friendship is to be found in the person of a wife, how can the writer of this book, or any one of sense or feeling, dare to cast a slur upon the name of matrimony ?

Ay, but the Mentor who favoured me with his interruption, drew the picture of a loving and faithful wife, of an excellent, sensible, and feeling woman. Does he forget the thousand, thousand, instances of frivolity, indifference, coldness, ingratitude, disaffection, infidelity, which are every day forced upon our notice, to

be in vain lamented ? What then is the reason of such occurrences ? This must be the question that will lead us to their real cause.

In a word, a marriage is likely to turn out happily, or otherwise, according to the choice a man makes of a wife. Its chance of success depends upon mutual regard, mutual sympathy, mutual taste, congeniality of feelings, and, no less also, a parity of conditions ;—on parity of intellect, not so much. With respect to this particular, it is safest that the husband should be the more intellectual of the two ; for then he is sure of being looked up to, and respected by his wife. If the contrary be the case,—as the wife will respect her lord in the one instance, she will despise him in the other :—he will be a “ King Log,” for her to laugh at, and impose upon. Men, and women too, are much to be pitied : it is not often they can make a choice of their own ; the parents frequently make up matches for them : as where two families have long known each other, and on account of the intimacy, wish it to be more closely cemented by the union of their children.

The affections of these children, it may not unfrequently happen, are strong towards each other, as they have most probably been brought up in each other's society: if so, all will be well enough in the alliance. But it may also be the case, and the case it often is, that no such affections are in existence ;—that the children care nothing about each other ; have other affections than towards one another ;—that they are thrust neck and shoulders before the altar, for no other reason, than that their respective parents were old friends. No appeal has been made to the heart, to the tastes, the passions, affections, habits, dispositions, tempers of those who are to be rivetted to the society of each other. No, the alliance is imperative ; and, therefore, attended with the certain chance of the parties wishing themselves separated before they have become man and wife four-and-twenty hours. Why then did not the children object ? Parents cannot shackle the mind. Yes, but they can control the actions ; objections may be dangerous ; the independence of the children may rest in their parents' hands.

Here is a picture of selfishness and tyranny ! a sacrifice by parents of the happiness of their own flesh and blood, for the gratification of the prejudice of those who compel it ! Why, it is as bad as Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia, if not worse !

Again, we see girls married because an advantageous offer is made ; the gentleman is perhaps, on his part, violently in love ; or is in want of a person to preside in his establishment ; one that he may be proud of—a handsome, accomplished, young female : there is, we will suppose, the same disparity of inclinations, the same want of congeniality, of which notice has been already taken. It is not then to be supposed that their love can be mutual ; why then are they husband and wife ?

But the sage matronly mother wisely reflects, that the prospect of independence, and the respectability of the connection, are too good to be rejected. “ The connection may enable me,” she will say, “ to marry off my eight *other* daughters ; who knows ? Besides, when they have known each other a little, I am sure they

will be prodigious friends, — no attachment warmer.” It puts me out of all patience to hear this; “*when they have known each other!*” Heavens! are hearts to be instructed thus to beat for one another, when nature has not originally inclined them to do so? Impossible! Such an idea is base, such calculations on human affections are degrading, and the experiment is an outrage on our nature.

It sometimes happens, I will admit, that where there has been no sort of regard on the part of the wife, she has been insensibly led into liking and honouring her husband: he may have shining talents, his constant study may be to please her: she will be ungrateful if she is insensible to the last; and will have little good sense if indifferent to the first. All women, almost, are captivated by talent; especially those for whose pleasure, in particular, its possessor may exert it. Nothing can be more delightful to them, because nothing can be more flattering; and flattery is the key to all hearts.

Want of handsome person, or even of good looks, is for the most part forgotten; willingly

pardoned, in the man of talent. The eye of woman does not require to be dazzled, as well as her mind; (I speak of general instances.) The same cannot be said with respect to virtuous qualities. In so much higher esteem does human vanity hold talent, than virtue.

Good-looks, combined with vapid intellect, will win few women, unless they are equally vapid with the object of their admiration.

I will again admit that instances, and many too, might be adduced, of a matrimonial alliance turning out satisfactorily, where there has been originally no affection on *one* side of the parties — (on that of the wife;) yet the constant assiduity and attention of her husband has won him the regard and fidelity of his partner. But the experiment may be a dangerous one; especially in the case of a capricious woman; or of one who is apt to admire the condition of others in preference to her own. If such an alliance *does* happen to turn out well, it resembles a prize in a lottery, where the blanks have an overwhelming preponderance.

Rarely does it happen that where a man marries for money merely, and for no pleasing qualities of either person or mind that he makes a good husband. He is too frequently neglectful, and often a most sordid and ungrateful ruffian. On the other hand, it is frequently the case that he behaves with the utmost attention, and shows himself sensible of the advantages he has gained; but any feeling of love must be out of the question.

In fact, it is my universal doctrine, that where there is no sympathy there ought to be no alliance; that is, there ought not to be, (according to my view of the case,) any chance incurred of a life of unhappiness, regret, and perhaps dishonour, mutually brought upon each other by two human beings, who have enough of worldly misery in their single condition. It may be suggested, that this rule, if it were acted upon, would tend to the suspension of the greater portion, or perhaps of all matrimonial connections. That I should be sorry for, indeed; but nevertheless I must remain fixed in my opinions.

Political economists, in these times of overwhelming population, would not, I dare say, have any objection to see it partially enforced.

Disparity of years is invariably a source of all the unhappy results which I have attached to badly assorted marriages.

Here the blame, for the most part, falls on the men. Old fellows *will* be fools enough to marry young wives, whose passions they can never gratify, with whose time of life they can never sympathize. They wed children, in comparison with themselves, whose levity, whose gaiety, but little accords with their own gravity and sluggishness.

If the poor girl is inclined to be ever so obedient—acquiescent, I will say,—to her old lord,—in fact, to like him as well as she can; yet this feeling stands a fair chance of being weakened, when she perceives that the alliance in which she is united is reflected on with ridicule or compassion.

Unless she has a good deal of philosophy, which it is difficult for a young female to maintain against the taunts of a whole world, she

will most likely become sensible of dislike and disgust for her husband, and if she feels this, it is impossible that she should not also evince it. In proportion as her dislike increases, so does the jealousy, suspicion, and tyranny of her old partner. This *must* render her unhappy, it *may* render her unfaithful: assuredly the first; and if the last, her infidelity will not be any additional cause for her unhappiness, though this is repugnant to the idea of religion.

Why would it not? why would it rather be a source of triumph to her,—though, indeed, a guilty one? Because, she shows the world that she has spurned—the constraint under which she has hitherto laboured; that she has vindicated the cause of youth, and the spirit of her sex. It was a degradation to her, she reflects, to go about with an old dotard, to be laughed at; or if compassioned,—yet, as has been before observed, the pity is as galling as the ridicule. The cause of either the one or the other was the same, and both are equally mortifying.

The husband is, meanwhile, not pitied at all for the infidelity of his spouse; every body lo

upon his misfortune as what he deserves, and what he might have expected. From the moment of his marriage, he is considered as having bought a pretty bauble, that could be of no use to him; and both are so badgered and bullied,—the husband so envied and animadverted upon,—the wife so coveted and compassioned—that they are nearly driven out of their senses before the honey-moon has elapsed.

This situation affords a grievous trial to any girl; if she can support the first shock of censure, buffet the first reflections of the world; show herself superior to its impertinence, indifferent to its opinion; she will soon establish for herself a triumph far more enviable than that which we have above witnessed her as possessing. If the world, in the one instance, is willing to excuse her, it will in this, adore and extol both herself and her sex.

No triumph is comparable to a virtuous one: not unfrequently, however, has the result been, that the old husband wears a head dress of horns; and if he does, his horns will be long enough, and strong enough too, to bear all

that can be hung upon them; that is to say, he need not distress himself much on the score of his dishonour, but may console himself with considering, as the rest of the world does, that he might have foreseen the consequences of his temerity. In fact, he will do well to put a good face upon the matter, wear his horns becomingly, and reconcile himself to his condition.

With all these instances of ill-consorted alliances before one, and the numerous woes respectively attendant on them, a man loses sight of that happy picture of conjugal felicity, which has some little time ago been contemplated. Men are so apt to look at the dark side of things, that they soon forget the pleasurable and more encouraging portion of the picture. It requires not, on a consideration of the whole, any hesitation in declaring, that a wife to one's mind is a great and rare prize. To find all the congeniality a man would wish for, is almost to be despaired of; and even should any one be so fortunate as to obtain it, yet, unless he is tolerably affluent, the distress which a family and its expenses, with all the

self-denial attendant on them, will occasion him; must be the cause of bitter dissatisfaction. It may be the case, that a man will be dissatisfied with his wife, and, in his impatience, blame *her* as the cause of his distresses: if he is just, he will blame himself alone. Somewhere or other the blame must fall, because the cause of regret and reproach still exists, and still must be lamented: philosophy repels this idea; but philosophy is not exercised till the spirits are exhausted by a strong gust of fretfulness. During this it is, that reproaches are vented, and regrets uttered; and in justice, it must be said, that they are indulged in by the husband, generally, at his own expense.

I could, if I pleased, give a no very enviable description of a large family, reared under the disadvantage of small means; but that I should perhaps be casting daggers into the souls of many, if I did.

Nay let me, morose old fellow as I am, rather pour balm into their wounded bosoms, by the assurance that very numerous are the instances of a large family, (I allude to the male part of

it,) being a blessing to the parents, raising them in the world, bringing them distinction and affluence. Such children, however, as these must be a little less fastidious, and somewhat more persevering than was the case with the son of my parents. They must be better educated, and they must have less to complain of, both in nature, and the early discipline in which that nature was trained.

It is now time I should summon the reader to set out with me on my matrimonial commission. Young as I was, I was soberly and steadily inclined. Dissipation had long ago lost its charm for me. Had it *really* ever any charm for me? I am inclined to doubt it. It was embraced as a refuge from the goadings of disappointment, at one period, and originally for the gratification of boyish vanity, and when incentives to reward were suspended.

But I must no longer delay: a sufficient prelude has been performed to the drama, in which my procrastinating conduct will be displayed: the main cause of my being what I am, an old bachelor. The reluctance with which I have

approached my subject, cannot surely have escaped notice ; from whence it may be augured, that the choice of a wife was viewed by me as a source of the greatest anxiety, incertitude, irritation, and difficulty.

I made a pilgrimage round the country, to many places ; I entered various circles of society ; I saw many females of different conditions, degrees of rank, of beauty, of intellect, and of age. I had no less choice afforded me, than I had difficulty in fixing it. Ever fastidious, how was I to be pleased ? how were my tastes to be exactly suited, or my expectations answered ? how was I to obtain all the congeniality my exquisite sensibility required ?

My darling Ellen had indeed the seeds of all that I wanted in a partner : there was mutual love to make us happy ; and as for the rest, I could have moulded her, so young as she was when I last saw her, into exactly the woman I could have idolized. In my early prospects of an alliance with her, this was one to which I fondly looked forward. Twice had

I been* disappointed with regard to the possession of her. Of course, if it had been possible, I should have endeavoured to console myself for my previous disappointments, by now addressing myself to that happy object. But again was this rendered impossible. I will not now dwell upon the reasons; it is sufficient to say, that if I was to look for a wife, she must be sought for in the person of some other than Ellen. When *she* was snatched from me, where was I to hope for another that could indemnify me for her loss? I was now too old to think of looking out for another quite young girl, to train up for a wife; where was I to find one ready trained to my liking? or one in whom my recollections revived all that I had loved in Ellen, both mental and personal? No where. One had false delicacy, another had no delicacy at all, or too much. One possessed very considerable mental endowments, but nothing of personal beauty to set them off. Another had much beauty,

* Chap. 1. B. 2. "Disappointments in Love."

but no mind. One had a graceful form, but a less agreeable countenance. Another had a pleasing countenance, but not so good a figure. The voice of one was scarcely melodious enough: it was either above or below the proper feminine pitch; it was too shrill, too thick, too deep, or too loud. Again, if the voice was pleasing, the manner of speaking was perhaps bad. One had not so small a foot as I could have wished, or did not put it on the ground flatly enough to please me. In fact, out of all that I saw, there were very few of those to whom it was in my power to have wedded myself, that appeared to me likely to make desirable partners for life.

CHAPTER VII.

A CHAPTER OF PROCRASTINATION.

To give a separate description of every belle I made acquaintance with, would carry me far beyond the limits proposed to myself in this narrative ; I should, besides, be compiling a mass of tedious repetition ; for all the fair creatures belonging respectively to a particular rank, would, comparatively speaking, possess but minute shades of difference between each other. The distinction must be drawn, then, between opposite ranks. I shall, therefore, make a description of one serve as a specimen for all, in their several degrees. The figures will thus stand out more strikingly

from my canvas, as the difference of their features is more strongly marked, and their character more contrasted.—As a pretty woman is always an agreeable object to me, in whatever sphere of life she may chance to move, I shall, for the sake of all the variety possible, and from a wish to embrace a memorial of every degree of the sex, give portraits of both the highest and lowest.

It is not to be supposed that every woman I saw or came near, was viewed by me with an intention of making her my wife, any more than one thinks of becoming a purchaser of every pretty toy that catches the eye in walking through a bazaar. The principle, to be sure, of my expedition was such as I have explained it to be ; the result is self-evident.

These wanderings, if they did not accomplish their object, yet afforded me very considerable pleasure. They were partly on foot, partly on horseback. At night, some hospitable mansion afforded me a shelter ; not infrequently that of a family with which I was acquainted, or had previously met. And then,

if the young mistress of the house pleased me, or was pretty, I was in love with her for the time, and until some prettier or more agreeable object engaged my attention. The blushes with which she received the young stranger, and the engaging little attentions she showed him, always had their due effect upon his heart.

At times, when suddenly benighted, I used to take up my abode in a cottage, and then was I no less interested with the neat, pretty smiling lass that placed the brown jug of milk and the coarse loaf on the oaken table before me.

In the fields, my heart throbbed with pleasure at the sounds of laughing cherry-checked village maidens, during the jocund season of harvest: in the town, (for I always used to take care to be in the way on any festive occasions) an impression was equally made on it by the modest groups, clad in pink and white, which the county used to send to decorate its balls.

I sometimes used to betray the plan of my

journeying, and its object, to my partner ; and it scarcely ever happened that half an hour was suffered to elapse before my secret had found its way all through the ball-room. It was amusing to me to see the matronly ladies brush near me, or pace up and down the room behind me, between the intervals of dancing, with their daughter or daughters at their side. It was no less amusing to witness the looks, of the young ones : the smirk of the less reserved and modest ; the quiet regard of the more reserved and better behaved,—which, nevertheless, spoke just as much as the giggle of the others. The lip of one would insensibly quiver, the eye twinkle, the blush just arise. It used to delight me to see all this pretty confusion. What agreeable moments of vanity used I to indulge in on these occasions ! How I used to laugh by myself on my retreat at the conclusion of the gaieties.

I used regularly to make ten or twelve fancy I was in love with them : I handed all with equal politeness to their carriages ; I adjusted the shawls of each with equal assiduity ; and


wished them all a good night with equal kindness. It was but fair; I had flirted with them all with equal appearance of satisfaction, young or not young, handsome or otherwise. I recollect once dancing, on the same night, with a girl of fifteen, and a dowager—I mean a spinster—of fifty, who chose to dance whenever she was within reach of a ball; I suppose from a laudable wish to vindicate the cause of her maiden condition, of which she was unwilling to compromise the sprightly character, although it had now some time forfeited its claim to inspiration. She ogled me like a satyr, and tumbled about me with a vehemence scarcely less boisterous than the flounderings of a grampus. What a contrast did the innocent smile, fair complexion, and sweet countenance of the one, afford to the opaque hues, elongated mouth, and distortion of feature, of the other. The face of the one was that of an angel—of the other, that of—a mask. The reader perhaps anticipated a harsh-en antithesis.

Whether I created any jealousy amongst my numerous partners, I do not know: I

not vain enough to think so: I did not endeavour to make myself more agreeable to one than another. None could feel that more attention had been paid to herself than to all the rest. They must have been all either pleased or displeased: I hope the former: at least they did not *show* any displeasure.

The next morning I again set off. To linger on the scene of the festivities when they were passed, and when those who gave a charm to them were gone, was a waste of time. By three o'clock at latest, on the succeeding morning, my partners had almost all taken their flight in different directions, to their respective habitations in the county. With their departure, all serious result of the preceding evening's flirtations was cut short. Thus I was unable to arrive an inch nearer the goal to which I was marching: like the old woman, in Terence, I moved, indeed, but did not gain ground.

Sometimes it happened that I fell into an un-ordinarily long conversation with a lady, whose daughter I had led back from the cotillion, or



minuet, or country-dance, in which we had been partners. And as she was sure to make herself acquainted with my design before the conversation was over, it generally terminated with a request; "That if I chanced to come into their neighbourhood, I would just take her house in my way. Mr. ——— would be delighted to see me; and they could, no doubt, tell me something about my route, and direct me to such objects of curiosity as were within reach."

These invitations I uniformly accepted; and having thus far given a general sketch of my roamings, I shall proceed to such agreeable particulars, as the cottage, the castle, the mansion, or the shed afforded me.

I had been a friend of Lord ———, at school; and he had, since that period, often asked me to come and see him in the country. I, therefore, took the opportunity of calling on him in my way to ———.

He had three most elegant and beautiful sisters. It was difficult to say, which of them had the most distinguished air, the greater

grace, or the most bewitching beauty. My heart sustained a painful struggle between the three; and the more so, because the emotion was secret and suppressed.

I think they liked me, independently of any partiality for their brother's friend; (in which particular, girls are very whimsical,) and seemed pleased with the impression which they were aware they had all made on me. But my loving these girls, that is, entertaining an attachment for one of them with any serious views, was desperate in my case. I had no wealth or title to confer; the boast of a good old family was the only one I possessed. This, perhaps, might have sufficed, had the length of my purse been able to keep in countenance that of my pedigree: but such was not the case. If circumstances had been otherwise, I am certain I could have made an alliance in this quarter; and the disappointment in the wish I had often cherished, of forming an alliance of distinction, was severe.

I always considered it a sin and a cruelty to marry, without the adequate means of ren-



desiring one's wife happy, as far as worldly enjoyments extend. I did not think, the women, on their part, so scrupulous. In nine instances out of ten, I found that they were glad to get married at all events.

This odious inadequacy of means prevented my marrying in many repeated instances; wherever, in fact, I should have been anxious to have formed a connection. In those instances, where I had not the same ambition, it happened on the contrary, that my means were sufficient; for what may be even a handsome support in some alliances, is nothing in those of a higher order. Such was the contradiction of circumstances by which I was harassed.

One of the invitations of which I was some little time ago speaking, was given me by the lady of a wealthy influential "knight of a shire." To have sought a wife from amongst the daughters of Mrs. M——, was attended with the same difficulties which I have just had cause to regret.

They were four in number, beautiful, ele-

gant, well-educated girls; though I do not think quite in such good taste, as those I had last quitted; nor so distinguished in appearance, on account of their not being so tall.

Their rank and my own would just have suited; but my purse could only measure a poor barley-corn where theirs could produce an ell. And when their prudent mamma had discovered this, she began to grow fidgetty; and saw me quit the house with smiles that spoke a very different meaning, to those with which my entrance into it had been greeted. She looked for an alliance that should add to the importance of her family; if not by means of wealth, by that of dignity; and she was very right.

How then was I to get married? where I was able to do so, my inclination was wanting, or my resolution was unfixed. Was I to link myself with a rich and vulgar, or an old woman, as the only hope of making up for the deficiency of my purse? This I did not want. Riches, I cared not for; except with the view of my compassing a desirable marriage.

It was evident, that rich girls of good education, with charms and accomplishments, or without the first and very little of the last, looked out with the reasonable hope of elevating their sphere.

In fact, I was in a sad dilemma.

The next house which I entered was that of a regular country squire, or country gentleman, as it is more commonly called now: Mr. E., one whose occupations of farming and field-sports engaged his undivided attention. It is needless to observe, that his daughters had seen less of the world than those of Mrs. M——. There was a want of that air which I always looked for in girls; and which, at half a glance, I discovered to be wanting, if it were so.

In some very rare instances have I seen this air so fully supplied by nature, and so happily supported by the attention of an elegant-minded mother, that girls, who have been almost exclusively brought up in the country, have possessed it nearly as much as if they had attended the "Drawing-rooms" from the period they quitted their nursery.

If these Misses E. had boasted the riches of Croesus, and would have laid them at my feet, I would not have married one of them. If I had done so, I should have lived in a perpetual state of stifled disgust and secret indignation. To have *shown* my dissatisfaction is a thing which I may hope I should have been too well bred to have done.


I detest dowdyism. I abhor the perkish, trumpery, insignificant manner which a school gives. To say the best of the manner acquired under a school discipline, it is, for the most part, flippancy, pertness, vulgarity, or insipidity. Which of these four results is most likely to be incurred, depends on the natural grain and disposition of the girl. Bad taste must be acquired under any circumstances, and this alone spoils all; it infects every movement, every word, every action; its image is stamped alike on air, on dress, on carriage; it is entertained in thought no less than in deed: it even communicates itself to the immediate sphere, in which the person to whom it clings may belong; it moves in her train; it hovers over the very

walls of the house; inspiring images of dowdism or pertness; or rather let me say, the house may be respectable enough, the walls venerable, but the association that attaches to them changes their appearance, and causes every object belonging to them to be viewed with repugnance.

I spoke a moment ago of girls who, though they have had few advantages of mingling in society, yet by the gift of nature, and proper management *at home*, are not the less elegant and distinguished in their appearance. In such instances as these, I cannot help expressing the delight I used to feel in witnessing the inspiring air of native, and comparatively unassisted grace. I admired it in proportion to the disadvantages, over which it had shown itself superior. On the other hand it doubly distressed me to see, that where all advantages of birth, station, and education were combined, yet dowdism and mawkishness would be still domineering.

It happened that I caught a violent cold by imprudence in staying out all night. The wea-

ther was so dreadfully hot that I could not bear the confinement of any walls. My lungs, too, were affected with inflammation ; I was so suddenly indisposed, that in the very first house to which I came, I sought an asylum. The acquaintance I made here, is, perhaps, the most pleasurable to my recollections of any that I fell into, throughout the whole course of my ramblings. The house was a good-sized cottage, built in the Elizabethan style. I remember it well : its gable ends, and sober grey coloured stone front, partially covered with ivy, clematis, and china roses. It was inhabited by a respectable widow and her daughter. Mrs. H—— was very much of a gentlewoman in her notions, though she did not merit the appellation of ladylike. She saw nothing of the world ; her life was passed in the country, and in seclusion ; yet she was by no means what is meant by the term countryfied. Her manners were perfectly simple, her address plain, not very engaging, certainly not repelling ; not in the least formal. Her daughter had much more pretension to the character of ladylike ; she was far superior to



the school-bred progeny of the country squire, whom I had just quitted. She had been brought up entirely at home, and by her mother, upon whom she reflected great credit; much more than she would have done had she been of a less naturally elegant mind. This beamed through her countenance, and displayed itself in her actions, in her movements, her carriage, her step. As she had seen nothing of the world, she could not pretend to any air of fashion: of this she was aware, and showed that she was so, by never assuming to venture on a region prohibited to her. By so doing she maintained her native grace in all its dignity; and one never felt the want of fashion, consequently one scarcely perceived the absence of it; certainly not on first seeing her, nor until the eyes had rested on her for a short time; so much was one struck with the appearance of distinction that was natural to her. To persons who have no eye for the finish of fashion, the want of it in Laura H. could not have been perceived at all. There was cheerfulness, too, mingled with her dignity; it was like the bloom of health, which sets off

beauty of feature; or like that beauty which set off her own grace. In fact, she was a girl that would have graced the very highest circles with but a little training. She possessed as many accomplishments as virtues. To take the example of one from each of these qualities—of her musical proficiency from the first, and her benevolence of heart from the last. I signalize these particularly from amongst the rest, because I felt their effects most sensibly; and to them was I much indebted for my recovery.

The kindness of Miss H—— originally admitted me under her roof—her mother happening to be out walking in the garden, at the time I made my application. She saw by my address and bearing that I was a gentleman; by my looks she perceived I was excessively ill. After making me sit down, she went to communicate my history to her mother. A room was shortly prepared for me by Mrs. H——, who had now come in, on the summons of her daughter; and medical attendance was provided me. My crisis of danger being over, Mrs. H—— conducted the care of my convalescence. Her hand adminis-

tered my medicines to me, her daughter's sometimes assisted in raising my head to the cup which her mother presented to my lip.

The satisfaction I felt one day at the sounds of a harp, made me inquire to whom I was indebted for it. Mrs. H—— informed me that it was her daughter whom I heard. From this day, that benevolent girl never failed to play and sing for my recreation whenever I wished it, every successive morning and evening of my convalescence. I declare, to speak without any affectation, my gratitude towards her was as strong as my admiration for her.

I spoke of her beauty not long ago: in truth she appeared to me more beautiful than in reality she was. Her face had rather too decided a character about it; it possessed a masculine feature, which I am not fond of in the feminine face. Her features bespoke less of softness and gentleness, than her manners displayed. Still she was handsome—a little above the middle size, but not exactly tall. Her eyes were black, her hair was black, her eyebrows thin and arched, her lips a little pouting, her

nose high and aquiline, her cheeks dimpled, her chin small and finely rounded off, the contour of her face oval, her complexion pale. She had a beautiful white throat. I shall be excused, I'm sure, for saying that the glimpse I caught of her through the door, as I lay on my sick couch, while she was singing, was enjoyed by me with no common transport. The sweet tones of her voice thrilled through my very soul, and every vibration of the chord of her harp struck upon my heart, and tuned it to the harmony of love.

I grew better and better: it was time I should proceed on my way; it was no easy task to prevail on myself to quit the presence of Laura H——. I can assure my readers, I was thinking seriously of putting the fatal proposal to her. But then, I thought that if I did, the pleasant journey which I had set out on, would be cut short before half of its enjoyments had been tasted. Or, I fancied, I was too precipitate; so the proposal was put off.

The only testimony I made of my passion

was by my looks, and that of kissing her hand, with some little emotion, at my departure.

This musical convalescence of mine, was a rare specimen of earthly delight. The languid state of body and mind being, on such occasions, sensible only of external impressions, and doubly so in proportion as it is more and more helpless,—those which I received, so touching as they were, and melodious, and the author of them so lovely, may be conceived as truly delightful. I used to dream, after experiencing them, of the music of the angels; and Laura's form and face always appeared prominently radiant in the celestial choir. The dream sometimes visits me even now; but so faintly and feebly that it is not the enchanting vision it used to be.

The next house into which I introduced myself was that of a country-clergyman; he had two daughters. Two pretty specimens of rural content, simplicity, and cheerfulness, testified by laughing, ruddy countenances.

The eldest had light hair, light blue eyes,

a pretty little mouth, and lips and nose, à la Roxalane, which is to me vastly pretty.

The younger sister, Fanny, had not such nicely-finished features as the other: they were rounder and flatter. Still, she was a pretty innocent-looking creature. Her innocent look, and little unobtrusive pug-nose, amused me. They were the most complete children, for their age, I ever saw in my life. Jessy, the eldest, was a little past seventeen; the youngest was just sixteen. Their chief employment, when the weather was fine, was that of picking violets and primroses along the hedgerows, and in the copses about the parsonage house, and in the evening arranging them into posies and nose-gays, for the purpose of distributing them through the different rooms of the house.

When it rained, they worked, and played on a vile jingling piano-forte, alternately. They did not appear to me to read at all: I fancy they would scarcely have had energy enough to attack a romance of three volumes. Yet they talked a good deal of such simple matters as they understood.

Their mother and father both, were peaceable, easy, good-sort of creatures, and saw nothing whatever wanting in their children.


It was sufficient for the mother that she had instructed her daughters in the common useful household occupations, and imbued their minds with the ordinary domestic virtues ; and that what they had been taught they retained. For the father, it was sufficient that they professed the doctrine which he preached, could say their catechisms, and appeared fresh, clean and neat, in their pew under the reading-desk on Sunday.

Such parents were exactly calculated to form such children, and no better. The character of the parents, especially of the mother, mainly decides that of the children. The air of innocence and simplicity that reigned round this quiet little abode, might be interesting to a philosophical mind ; but to the adulterated taste of the world, it cannot be otherwise than contemptible. If it were possible that I could have put up with either Jessy or Fanny, as a mate, it would have been, because with either I could have

done just what I pleased. But then I fear, that the soil would have been too weak to have made it worth while to bestow all the cultivation I should have wished to give it. The numerous new ideas of things and society, which must indispensably have been ingrafted on their poor unsophisticated minds, would have overwhelmed them ; yet this attempt must have been undertaken, to make them comprehend the most casual remarks relative to any class of subjects higher than that of a dairy, a green-lane, a village fair, or a sermon.

I considered, on quitting these innocents, that if they were not selected by Heaven as fit subjects for eternal bliss, I could not imagine what spirits would be ; and the conclusion I drew from thence was, that there would be no chance of salvation for any body.

A fine buxom rosy-faced girl, at the inn at which I slept, the daughter of the landlord, took a liking to me. This partiality it was assuredly impossible to resist, and I hesitated not to show myself sensible of it. We



played such innocent pranks as consisted in what old ballads and plays call "bussing;" these frolics being conducted during a jovial *tête-à-tête* over cakes and milk-punch. Both her father and mother were away from home, and her sister was gone out, as she informed me, to walk with "Young Mister Gullins, of the Pig and Teapot," or "Cod's Head and Copper Candlestick," or some other such incongruously purporting specimen of sign-painting.

I had worked myself into a humour of boisterous merriment, and I determined to give a full scope to it. My sensibility was for the time forgotten, my fastidiousness laid aside; nay, I was pleased with myself for my condescension; and whenever a man's vanity is at all flattered, he is ever delighted.

In a different mood, I should have been shocked at myself for such extravagance; and I will acknowledge that I feel rather shy in unfolding this portion of my confessions. It will not be demanded of me, I should hope, to declare all the nonsense that I uttered in this

intoxicated gust of wild jollity. What I said was suited to the whimsical part I was playing; I believe I swore that the girl who sat by me was worth all the duchesses in the kingdom; that if I ever married, it would be herself; and in such good humour did I put her with her own looks and qualities, that I dare say she fancied there was no other girl in the world worth loving. Moreover, she prided herself on possessing none of that hypocrisy which she fancied often served as a concealment in her betters for very wayward emotions of the heart. Such a whimsical fellow was I, at times, that I should not have been at all surprised, had I even committed myself so far as to make an alliance much beneath my station. When I was not myself, when my sensibilities were lulled, I thought little of falling into the oddest extravagancies. Nay to this day, amidst all the gloom of my habitual moroseness, I am attacked sometimes by one of these strange frisky impulses, so totally at variance with every other part of my character. Of all my rural flirtations, one which was

conducted in Monmouthshire, near the banks of the Wye, often brings to my mind many pretty and picturesque ideas. It half inclined me to turn shepherd ; content myself with my scrip and bottle of curds and whey, or buttermilk, and follow my flocks. My fortune, for a pastoral condition, was ample ; Phillis, (I call her so for want of her proper name), myself, and all our flock of children and sheep, would be well sustained and provided for. All this formed a most soothing idea for me, as I sat at the door of the little rustic cottage, which she and her old mother tenanted. The Arcadian dreams it suggested were very tranquillizing and agreeable.

Phillis was a lovely rustic ; a brunette ; when she smiled she showed brilliantly white teeth ; these were contrasted by bright black hair, dark blue eyes, and long dark eye-lashes ; nor did the taste of any lips ever seem more delicious to me than that of hers.

The perpetual restlessness that carried me, with the giddiness of a butterfly, from one end of the country to the other, tended every day

to confirm my indecision more and more, until it at length became a habit. The chance of any determinate resolution, as to marriage, grew fainter and fainter, till at length it might well be despaired of; and the idea of matrimony *now* would be preposterous.

With all the vile habits, which from various unamiable or unfortunate causes I have contracted, where, I should be glad to know, is the woman to be found who would sacrifice her comfort and happiness to a union with so disagreeable and wretched an animal as myself?

CHAPTER VIII.

A FEW REFLECTIONS SUGGESTED BY THE
PRECEDING CHAPTER.

IF a philosopher, essayist, or professed author had treated the subject upon which I have just been occupied, he would most probably have divided it into four formal heads. Those of his first division would exhibit the extremes of ignorance and erudition, in which the village maiden and the "blue" would be placed in outrageous opposition to one another. Those of his second division would consist again of the extremes of lowliness and fashion. The intermediate degrees, both of conditions and endowments, would be in all likelihood passed

over, these exalted spirits not being in general willing to dwell on any other than the most striking features of a subject. To such lofty formalities the writer of this humble work does not pretend to aspire ; at the same time he has no doubt, that had he used a little formality, it would have been pardoned, when that which characterizes the writer's age should be taken into consideration. A few general reflections relative to these extremes, he may be allowed to make ; in doing which, he begs leave to return to the narrative in his own proper person.

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It may appear rather paradoxical,—but I always found that it required as much address to converse with a humble untutored female, as with one of the society of blue-stockings ; for a very good reason, in-as-much as one *will* not help you to launch into a conversation ; the other *can* not. As most women in all ranks have a good deal of intelligence, if a man understands giving them a clue to the display of it, the passive simplicity of even a dairy maid



may be warmed into something like energy ;— she may be enticed into talking interestingly in her way, if her humble notions are flattered, and her little natural vanities kindly humoured.

A “blue” may be rendered interesting, if one knows how to manage her. All the ladies belonging to this denomination, with whom I have ever chanced to be acquainted, have been of the most inveterate and severe description ; enjoying the timidity of those who seemed alarmed at encountering them, and leaving to them the entire effort of forming a conversation. A spark or two of humour is irresistible in setting fire to the train of conversation : should this fail, the “blue” must be beat at her own weapons, and pedantry must stalk forth in its heavy armour to overwhelm her. In these remarks, I speak solely from personal experience, and hope sincerely that my readers have fallen in with “blue ladies” of a more relenting and acquiescent character, than it has been my lot to encounter.

An engaging lovely female is, as I have said, an object of interest to me, in whatever

station of life she may be. But still, I must confess, that beauty always receives a great additional lustre in my eyes from rank ; ay, I will allow, that I should be weak enough to find a girl of ordinary beauty, but of rank, handsomer than a humble maiden, whose beauty had ten times a higher pretension.

Beauty, after all, unless it is very striking and splendid, derives much assistance from dress ; the adaptation of attire to the setting off of the features and figure, is what the poor villager cannot know. Her simplicity may be *interesting*, but the grace, elegance, and dignity, that fashion *sometimes* lends, are possessed of positive enchantment. Fashion, however, cannot impart these to *all* : if she does, Nature must still be bounteous in her assistance ; but if *she* be wanting, fashion will lavish her efforts in vain—at least, to please *me*. I do not pretend to speak for any one but myself.

If I had written a description of the adventures above set forth, at the time I was engaged in them, the more glowing language of youth, I doubt not, would have done greater justice

to the subject. But, alas! all this warmth could not be expected from the poor old unhappy creature, which I now am—as peevish with misfortune as I am frosty with age. Yet I have roused my energies to describe my story as warmly as I could. Even in youth, (so soured had I been by various untoward causes,) it might have been tintured with a spirit of moroseness; but the tone of it must have been gayer on the whole; for the animal spirits in youth *will* rise, and dispel the clouds of heaviness as they occasionally blacken.

The envy, as an old man, that I feel for the power of enjoyment I possessed as a young one, renders the recollection of all the pleasures I have been dwelling on, bitter—most bitter. The reflection that so many delicious privileges, which I once enjoyed, are now denied to me, makes me look on myself as an inferior being to that which I once was—as degraded and fit no longer to exist.

What a misery to look on these stiff and shrivelled fingers, as they tardily perform their functions in the process of writing this work,

and think that they are the same which once pressed the white and delicate palm of beauty ! I might go on uttering regrets over those lips which my own have met—that sweet breath which I have inhaled—those glowing eyes which have beamed before mine, and electrified me by the love-darting fluid which they shed.

And it is *I* who have been thus near to so much loveliness, delicacy, and grace ! *I*, whom that mirror opposite reflects thus withered and wrinkled. Why am I forced to view *myself* so hideous and revolting ? Why did I not die when I lost buoyancy of spirits, lightness of figure, animation of countenance ? When will death come to divest me of the consciousness of this loathsome appearance ? It is not vanity, it is regret, that extorts these murmurs from me.

BOOK THE THIRD.



BOOK THE THIRD.

CHAPTER I.

THE OLD BACHELOR ON THE ROAD AGAIN.

IF the reader is ready to start on the journey, myself and Barbara are equally so. We arrived at Bath without any more of the annoyances we had hitherto been doomed to suffer. The two or three first days after my arrival were spent in looking about for a convenient lodging: one, at which I looked, had rather a singular cause of objection; I shall therefore particularize it. I was just about to agree upon taking it, when I observed that the plaster of the wall, on the staircase, was very much

knocked off; and on demanding the cause of such disfigurement, was informed that it ~~was~~ occasioned by the undertaker's men in carrying "the coffins down stairs."

"The coffins!" I exclaimed—"what coffins?"

"Oh! Sir," said the landlady with a smile, "the coffins of such as have died in the house."

"Why, you must have had a monstrous number in your house that have died, and been carried down stairs!—the wall is knocked to pieces."

"Oh yes, Sir, a tolerable number, to be sure,—say a dozen, perhaps, or fourteen."

"*A dozen, perhaps, or fourteen!*—Come along, Barbara; come along, Mrs. Busby: for God's sake! let us make the best of our way out of the house, or we may perhaps be added to the 'dozen or fourteen' ourselves."

I shuffled out of the street-door as fast as I could, thanking my stars I had inquired concerning the rubbing of the wall previously to coming to terms about the lodging. I think

there are few who would not, on an occasion of this sort, have been as superstitious as myself.

I spent a fortnight agreeably enough in bathing, and sauntering about in the mornings; and so well did I employ my evenings, that I finished my Confessions all but a page or two. The relief I found from the bathing was so great, that my rheumatism was nearly cured before the fortnight was over. I enjoyed the heat of the water; and could have consented to be almost par-boiled. One morning, as I was comfortably launched up to my chin in the water, I perceived a lady at the other end of the bath, (also in the water,) whose features I fancied I recollected. Again and again did I gaze upon her, and at last was tolerably certain that she was a person to whose kindness I have borne such ample testimony in the mention of my matrimonial expedition. She was, indeed, the benevolent creature who had, when a girl, been so attentive to me in my illness at that period; and had afforded me so much pleasure by the music of her harp. I could not

resist the desire I felt of introducing myself to her; and though the condition in which I was, may be considered as not exactly the most becoming for a recognition with a lady, (notwithstanding the water was as high, or higher, than my shoulders), yet I could not resist approaching her. The lady retreated; and I followed, begging pardon for the intrusion, and suggesting my belief that I had the honour of knowing her. Heaven knows, she must have thought the chase I was giving her round the bath, somewhat strange at first; but she soon perceived by my countenance and manner, that its object was perfectly excusable, and so arrested her flight, being, I dare say, curious to hear what I had to say. There were not above two or three persons present to witness this extraordinary scene; they no doubt took it for a burlesque of the story of Apollo's chase of Daphné. The moment I mentioned her name to her, and my own also, adding the circumstances of her early civility to me, she immediately recalled every thing to mind that I had said; and, expressing her pleasure at seeing

me, begged me to come to her house near Sydney Gardens, as soon as I had finished bathing. Mrs. Conyers was the name she had now for some years borne. The impulse of the moment urged me to an injudiciously hasty movement of the right arm and leg, for the purpose of coming close to her, in order to shake her by the hand, when, alack ! a violent cramp seized me, and for the time deprived me of the use of my limbs ; down I fell, and was very nearly being drowned ; drowned, however, I was not—thanks to the assiduity and attention of the people in the bath.—To whose assistance, individually, I am indebted, or what were the particulars of their attentions, I am totally unable to relate ; all that happened at this critical juncture is obscured from me in gloom and darkness.

When I came to myself, I found that I was in bed at my own lodgings. I felt very weak, and much oppressed by certain strong fumes of brandy, which were exhaled from some quarter or another, across my nostrils ; there was a

weight too upon my neck, that made me very uncomfortable.

This weight, I found, was occasioned by the arm of Mrs. Barbara Busby; the fumes also of brandy were breathed from the lips of the same personage. It may easily be guessed what sort of condition she was in. I did all I could to extricate myself from her embrace, which after some trouble I succeeded in doing; and at the same time, brought her a little to her senses.

The answers which she gave to my interrogatories, concerning the circumstances of her being found lying in the posture I have described, confirmed me in the opinion that Mrs. Busby,—the hitherto respectable, and exemplary Mrs. Barbara Busby—was completely intoxicated.

The particulars of her disgrace appeared to me, from what I learnt subsequently relative to my own condition, to be these: After I had been brought home from the bath, brandy, amongst various other remedies, was profusely made use of by the officious attendants for the purpose of resuscitation,—for the relaxation of

my stiffened joints, and the infusion of animation into me. It is a wonder they did not kill me amongst them. A large portion of the spirit, over and above that which had been used, was left in the bottle by the bed-side ; of which, as well as of myself, the tender Mrs. Busby was left in charge, after the other persons that had attended me had quitted the room.

But the brandy engaged her attention more than the care of myself: to resist the application of the bottle to her lips was an impossibility: and every time she tasted the liquor, it was applauded more and more, till at last she was entirely overpowered by the quantity she had imbibed, and, reeling upon my bed, fell with her fist thumping upon my eye,—her arm subsequently arranging itself across my windpipe.

The thump was no doubt the cause of my being aroused: this resuscitation was providential; since, if such had not been the case, I might have had a second chance of suffocation from the pressure of her arm.

I was too weak to scold, and if I had been able to do so, she was too stupid to profit by

being scolded. I rung the bell, and had her conveyed out of the room by some servants, whose attendance I procured as a substitute for her own.

This happened late in the evening : the next morning my housekeeper came into my room, as usual, with the breakfast. Her countenance betrayed no symptoms of concern, no consciousness of guilt whatever ; but on the contrary, was as placid and composed as if nothing had happened of which she need be ashamed. She fancied, no doubt, that she could talk me over on this occasion, as she had done on others of less moment ; but she was mistaken. I was determined to afford her for once, an exception to the general rule. I charged her in plain terms with her misbehaviour.

“ How could you think, Mrs. Busby, of bringing yourself into the disgraceful condition, in which you were yesterday evening detected ? I thought your regard for respectability and good conduct had been of a more scrupulous nature, than it appears to be.”

“ Why, now, what *can* make you speak so

seriously, Sir—*to-be-sure?*—Why, I was only a little drowsy, from having sat up by your bedside the whole day, taking care of you, and watching how you slept, after you were blooded. And how do you do to-day? I hope you feel pretty well considering such a serious accident !”

“No, no, Mrs. Busby, it will not do to turn the matter off in that way ; never mind me ; I am well enough to-day : but I wish to say a little more about yourself : that drowsiness of yours was not more occasioned by sitting here to watch *me*, than by making an acquaintance with the brandy !—why you know you were intoxicated !”


“Now for shame on yourself, Sir, for such an unworthy accusation as this ! *I* intoxicated ! How *can* you say such a thing ? Is a poor woman to be charged with drunkenness, because she happens to fall asleep ?—did you ever find reason to accuse me in this way before ?—only to think of such language from *you !*”

Upon this, she commenced whimpering with

all the *crocodilism*, if one may be allowed the expression, of which she was mistress; but it was to no purpose; I was inflexible: my heart was as unyielding and obdurate as adamant.

“Dry your eyes, Mrs. Busby,” I said, “dry your eyes; neither your tears nor your excuses have any effect upon me. You shall not be permitted to behave in this way with impunity, I assure you. I have from henceforth done with you, and discard you from my service: you have been suffered to have your own way not infrequently, but it is too much to suppose you shall have it in this instance. No, no; go back to your friends at Gloucester. I give you leave to stay with them as long as you please; but you shall never come back to me.”

This bitter speech elicited tears in abundance, and many protestations of affection for myself, interest for my health and my concerns; but nothing could shake me: Mrs. Busby was discarded, and I was left without a housekeeper, without a cook, without a companion, without a nurse—all were lost in the dismissal of Barbara Busby.



To avoid the chance of coming in her way again, I resolved on a speedy departure from Bath. Feeble as I was, I ordered the carriage, with the intention of setting out on my journey that very day. The ducking I had undergone had cured me of my love for bathing; and, independent of this, there were no allurements in Bath to detain me. The regrets that it awakened were almost too bitter to be agreeable—still they possessed their charm.

Before I left the place, I called at the house of Mrs. Conyers, who, as the servant informed me, had just set out to Cheltenham, leaving a note for myself.

The purport of this communication was, that she was obliged to go thither, to meet Mr. Conyers, with whom she was shortly to return to Bath, when she hoped to see me at her house: she added, that she had sent to inquire after me on the preceding evening, and was glad to hear I was doing well, and much regretted the mishap I had suffered.

All this was kind enough; but as I did not know that I should ever pay Bath another visit,

or have an opportunity of seeing her again, I resolved on taking Cheltenham in my way back to Oxford, for the purpose of visiting Mrs. Conyers.

CHAPTER II.


ON THE ROAD AGAIN.

ON my arrival at Cheltenham, I lost no time in looking for Mrs. Conyers. She could not help smiling, while she repeated her regrets at my untoward accident. The idea of it alone, was sufficient to make any one smile; and I must really give myself credit for joking on it, with greater good humour than I usually show.

There are few persons who had more good qualities to recommend them than her husband: he was an amiable and benevolent man, which both his countenance and voice bespoke. He was also a man of considerable information. A foreign climate, as well as native, had con-

spired to render him quite an invalid ; and when he was not drinking the waters at Cheltenham, he was taking the benefit of warm bathing at Bath. I was not more an invalid myself; than Mr. Conyers was, with his complaints of liver and lumbago. But, unlike myself, he bore his indisposition with exemplary patience; he had, indeed, a source of great happiness and consolation in an excellent wife ; nor did I ever see connubial attachment more strongly displayed, than in the instance of Mrs. Conyers and her husband. The qualities which they mutually possessed, could scarcely have conducted to any other result. Shortly after their marriage, Mrs. C. had accompanied her husband out to the East Indies ; and if I may judge by the abhorrence with which she spoke of the climate, it could not have been to gratify her own inclination that she encountered it.

During the time that I remained at Cheltenham, I was constantly their guest, and had many agreeable conversations with Mrs. Conyers, hearing from her the various incidents of



her life, since we had met, and recounting to her those of my own in turn.

One evening, we had been talking about India, the climate, the society, and the voyage out, when, after some little pause, she somewhat abruptly observed :—" I little expected to see you, (if ever I might have expected to see you again,) in this state of celibacy, Mr. —. I should rather have looked to seeing you married long ago, like myself, and with a family. Do you not feel very lonely ?"

The words were so many daggers to me—the contrast between her own cheerfulness and my moroseness, goaded me to the quick.

" Why, yes," I replied, " I do feel lonely—lonely enough, God knows !—hum—ah !—but it is too late now to remedy."

. " O no ! never too late. Why too late ? There are many who are as . . . "

She checked herself.

. " As old as myself who have married, you mean to say—ah ! perhaps so ; the more fools they. What business have I, such a


strange-mannered, strange-looking being as I now am, to marry?"

"Well, now, that appears to me to be the very reason for matrimony. A wife would make you change that strangeness of appearance of which you speak; and you would soon acquire some domestic habits—would he not, Mr. Conyers?"

"Why, my dear," said her husband, "where habits have been a long time formed, it would certainly be a matter of difficulty to alter them; but it would be an instance of most unusual fortitude in Mr.—, if he made the attempt of reforming them, if he succeeded, he would have no small cause of satisfaction."

"I thank you, Mr. Conyers, for the compliment," said I, with a sardonic leer; "that is to say, you do not approve of my present habits."

"No, Mr.—, I did not mean to cast any reproach upon you; I merely meant to observe, that as the habits you cherish are unlike those acquiesced in by the rest of the world, that the world would be likely to give you credit for agreeing with, rather than resisting its forms.



Besides, you spoke of yourself rather in a tone of dissatisfaction."

"True, true, so I did. But as for the world, it is a pleasure to me to oppose it. I hate the world, Mr. Conyers, and I love to show that I do. I never profited by it—I never was encouraged by it. I never won its applause—very few agreeable persons have I ever met with in it, and I therefore detest it, and never will be like it."

"Ah! you did not encourage this vein," remarked Mrs. Conyers, sighing, "when I knew you first." "Oh," continued she, turning her eyes upwards, "what a different person are you now, to what you were then; or to what you *might* have been."

"To what I *might* have been, Mrs. Conyers, say you?"

"Yes, if you had pursued a different course of existence, from that which you have so long embraced."

"Ah! it is a pity," observed her husband, "that you never married, never tried the harmony and sociability of a domestic life."

It may appear very unamiable, but I was beginning to feel annoyed at what I considered a catechizing, and grumbled out something about the insipidity of a domestic life, and the restraints to which it subjects a man; and, my having had too much restlessness of spirit to enjoy it, or conform to it; however, I repressed the risings of ill-humour, and disguised my moroseness by a piece of flattery; and turning to Mrs. C. I said,

“Ah! madam, I believe that there is one alliance which might have saved me from the condition to which I have doomed myself, and it would have been no other than that which Mr. Conyers has had both the wisdom and happiness of making.”

I did not wait to hear what either the wife or the husband said in answer to this; in truth, they were surprised, and remained silent at first; but before any thing had escaped their lips, I turned abruptly away, and left them.

On the occasion of this conversation we had been walking in the public gardens. I liked this way of passing an evening with them, bet-

ted than being at their house, as I encountered the annoyance of the children there.

The family consisted of four children, a boy and three girls; the youngest of these was about ten years old, or more perhaps. She was a pert, inquisitive, little thing; and my odd appearance, and eccentric ways, so much attracted her notice, and excited her curiosity, that I was pestered by it to no small extent.

"Mamma, why does Mr. — wear that droll thing behind his back?" pointing to my pig-tail. "Mamma, why does Mr. — take such a quantity of snuff, and spill it so all over his neckcloth?—and, mamma, why does Mr. — eat in such an odd way?—and, mamma, why does he wear such a *very* odd dress? look at his coat, and look at his hat, mamma; he, he, he!"

"For shame, my dear Jane, you ought not to be so rude. Hush! I insist upon it, this moment." But it was to no purpose that mamma looked angry and dissatisfied; Miss Jane would not hold her tongue, or repress her remarks; which were one evening so troublesome, that I determined not to be bothered any more with

them, and therefore removed myself from the possibility of encountering Mrs. Conyer's happy family, by leaving Cheltenham. Besides, I was growing sick of the place, and the blue pill system, with which people are dosed here,—or were dosed, annoyed me.

In justice to Mrs. Conyers, I should say that this troublesome brat was the only one of her children that she had been weak and imprudent enough to make a pet of,—to spoil. And this she had done, from an idea that the child was a genius: every thing it said was laughed at; every foolish remark was lauded as *witty*; every trick, grimace, and gesture, was encouraged and approved; so the child was rendered one of the most wayward, self-willed, and unmanageable urchins of the set, and a nuisance to all who called on her parents.

I always re-commenced my journey with apprehension; yet, I was glad to be in motion again: nothing renders me so impatient as being stationary, any where except at home; and from


home, I always feel too indolent to move. Once more on the road, I conned over part of what I had written at Bath, which was much to the following effect.

I have found it difficult to meet with many that sympathized with me; but the barrier that was in early life placed between myself and the rest of the world, was never half so strong as it has now long since become.

If there is any one cause of congratulation, which the review of my career allows me, it is, that I did not become a bear, or an ourang-outang, spontaneously; that my present dissocial state is not built on any flimsy foundation; that I did not forswear "good men's feasts," and the cheerfulness of converse; that I did not crush all the better feelings of humanity, from a mere sudden fit of caprice, or a temporary impulse of disgust or dissatisfaction.

It is not every body in my circumstances that can entertain a reflection so consolatory as this.

There is one great cause of the dissociality of feeling that haunts me, which demands to be mentioned in addition to the preceding catalogue. It is to be found in the circumstance, that from the earliest periods of my youth I have ever had very few friends. Even in the gayest season of youth I had but few; those



do. This compulsory monotony and inaction rendered me miserable. There was not a young man or woman, whom I saw; not a youthful pleasure that I contemplated, that did not make me regard myself as already old.

I had no notion of allowing of any such thing as a "*middle age*:" I hated the sound of it. It imported to my ears, that a man was harnessed to all the most pressing fatigues and occupations of life, without the power of mingling in any of its more captivating enjoyments, or indulging in its most interesting and exhilarating recreations. I figured him to myself, as a sentinel, who is bound to march gravely up and down in the face of society, while all the rest of the world are either making a free use of their limbs, which is the case in youth, or reposing and indulging in such whims as pleased them—which is allowable to age.

The middle aged man alone is restricted from doing either the one or the other; he alone is a stranger to liberty; alone per-

petually galled with restraint, labour, and denial; while all is active enjoyment or relaxation around him.

The moment, therefore, that I was obliged to forfeit my claim to the exercise of youthful energies, I plunged into the opposite extreme of the indolence of age. One characteristic of age I felt was every day more and more strongly creeping on me; that is, that the passions were becoming completely weakened within me, and the affections blunted.

If there had been no other reason for the neglect of matrimony, this alone would have been sufficient. It was a step, which it was impossible for me ever to have taken, unless the warmth and desire of love had mainly actuated me; so that all thoughts of marriage were decidedly abandoned at this period for ever.

I know that there are many men of thirty, who go on from that time to the age of forty or fifty, indulging in gallantry and merriment, with the same show of appetite and ardour that they evinced at twenty or five-and-twenty.

But "this playing a part" disgusted me; the affectation of putting on youth, when it no longer existed, was to me odious. The effort under which these men must necessarily be labouring, in their attempts to be gay and frolicsome, was contemptible in my ideas. No: I never could consent to deceive myself by "shamming young," in this sort of way.

So behold the commencement of my "*Old Bachelorship*," at the age of thirty..

From that date I commenced all those habits which characterize old single fellows like myself; and I now look back on my *début* in *Old Bachelorship* with surprise, at the readiness with which I adopted all the oddities, whimsicalities, prejudice, and dissociality, with which this condition is generally attended.

I have now doubled that age, together with the addition of nearly eight years; in the course of which period, I have become, (I should *hope*,) totally unlike any other sublunary being; always excepting those old "foggrums," whose situation is similar to my own.

I am aware, that throughout my existence,

I have found it difficult to meet with many that sympathized with me; but the barrier that was in early life placed between myself and the rest of the world, was never half so strong as it has now long since become.

If there is any one cause of congratulation, which the review of my career allows me, it is, that I did not become a bear, or an ourang-outang, spontaneously; that my present dissocial state is not built on any flimsy foundation; that I did not forswear "good men's feasts," and the cheerfulness of converse; that I did not crush all the better feelings of humanity, from a mere sudden fit of caprice, or a temporary impulse of disgust or dissatisfaction.

It is not every body in my circumstances that can entertain a reflection so consolatory as this.


There is one great cause of the dissociality of feeling that haunts me, which demands to be mentioned in addition to the preceding catalogue. It is to be found in the circumstance, that from the earliest periods of my youth I have ever had very few friends. Even in the gayest season of youth I had but few; those

few were chiefly to be found in my companions at college. Such friendships as these, last but for the time during which the parties are in each other's presence. They are built on too slight a foundation to be stable; they are kept up, on the principle merely of a mutual contribution of amusement; absence and separation soon extinguish them. If they are talked of in after-life with merriment, they are recollected with very little real regret; and generally they will be mentioned with reproach. When sobered by time, and chastened by regularity of habits, we can scarcely look upon these pleasures of our youth as really pleasures; we are more inclined to censure them as a wild career of frivolity and vice; and, consequently, we cannot feel much regard for our companions in a career which we condemn in ourselves. Hence college acquaintance and college friendship is scarcely any thing more than a name, the moment that the period passed at the University is at an end.*

* The author of course speaks exclusively of a *wild* career: a subject of very general reproach, he doubts not.

In fact, the friendships of college, like its studies, live but on the spot where they are pursued. The analogy is exact. I must be allowed a moment's digression, just to express my sentiments relative to the last. And let me ask,—What young man of sense is there, who has not, on entering upon the stage of life, looked back upon his studies at college with indignation, when he reflects that they were, for the most part, a waste of the most precious years of his life? He is now, all at once, expected to take an interest in subjects of which he is ignorant; to have an acquaintance of the legal and political institutions of his country—her charters, her enactments, her foreign relations and domestic economy. Of all this he knows nothing, or has but a superficial and vapid idea. At the same time he is most sensible, that his attention should have been sedulously directed to these objects in the course of his education.

How, I should be pleased to learn, is a young man, of good family, high connexions, and powerful influence, who has been bred up to



nothing but a knowledge of Latin, Greek, or mathematics, when called upon, as soon as he quits the University, to take his seat in Parliament, be fit to undertake such a responsibility? How can he have the assurance to commence senator of this great *practical* nation?

If he is unfit for his station, which he certainly must be, the fault is not to be imputed to him, but to a vile antiquated selfish system of much mischief and imposition. It is to be attached to those unworthy aristocratic prejudices, by which this quackery and imposition are kept up, vigorous and vital with poison, to debilitate the sons of sons to the third and fourth generation, ay, perhaps even to the *hundred* and third, and *hundred* and fourth.

I love aristocratic feelings, and even prejudices, generally speaking,—but, with respect to places of education, and systems of tuition, it irritates me to see their mischievous tendency. Let them give way to a little good sense and good feeling for the real interests of the youth of this country; let not that valuable portion of life, from the age of nine to that of nineteen,—

or from eight to eighteen,—as it may happen,—be *wasted* at school. Again, let it not be further *wasted*, from the age of eighteen or nineteen, to that of twenty-three or four. It is perfectly cruel upon a young man to be driven into the world with the prospect of having to acquire a load of knowledge, with which he ought already to be acquainted; glad, at the same time, to forget a vast deal of that which he has been learning.

There is ample room, let me assure every body, to gain all the acquirements which are now gleaned through a period of twenty-four years, in just one half the time, or even less. We acquire a knowledge of French, Italian, German, or Spanish, with the application of no very long time; why should we be a score of years engaged in the acquisition of Greek and Latin, which are, after all, very imperfectly learned?

The *system* is to be blamed; the radically vicious plan of education. Let some better system become fashionable. How was Montaigne taught Latin, let me ask? and was there ever

a more accomplished scholar?—Why should our aristocracy be willing to patronize a vicious system?

Reformations appear to be seriously adopted in the laws of the *country*; why should they not be equally so in the laws of *education*? by which, as they are defective or salutary, a country will derive advantage or suffer detriment. Let those who are parents, feel for the interest of their children, if they do not for that of their country. Let those who are not parents, consider the last, the greatest, and most irresistible of these motives.

From this hatred of the system of our institutions of education, I have always looked with coolness on those gentlemen under whose guidance such institutions are conducted. The fault, however, does not rest with them, but with those who support that system, under which they act as instruments.


I beg leave to say, that I have advanced these observations in subservience to no political creed, but from entirely unbiassed and conscientious motives; in doing which I claim

credit to myself for more virtue than I thought I possessed.

From my sentiments with regard to friendships formed at college, the reason will be understood why I have no friends left of my college acquaintance.

I will not speak in the same manner of friendships formed at an earlier date; when the heart is more innocent, the feelings less disguised, the affections less adulterated, and consequently attached to objects more deserving their exercise.

There is a soothing charm, partaking of pleasure and regret, in looking back upon the innocence of boyhood in opposition to the depravity that so hastily succeeds it. In boyhood there is comparatively nothing for which to reproach ourselves: at the mischief of which we were then guilty, we smile: it was inspired, not so much by vicious feeling, as by careless wantonness. Those who partook of our innocent pastimes, we feel inclined to love as long as life is extended to us; they were our companions on that happy soil from which we had



not yet transgressed to wander over the boundaries of vice.

Towards the latter end of my career at school I have described myself as betrayed into vice; but such was not the case during the earlier portion of it. One friendship, that I formed during that early period, long remained dear to me, until death cut it off; it existed through my college career, (but this latter part of it is always blotted out from my recollection, and my views stretched back to its better and more interesting period.) The object of it had been, before his death, many years married, and occupied with pursuits which had perpetually separated him from me and my haunts. Once, perhaps, in three years we chanced to fall in with one another; then the shake of the hand was indeed cordial, then the mutual inquiry was anxious and sincere, then was the heart repaid by a moment devoted to the feelings of real friendship, for years of chilling dissociability; then did I forget that I was the morose unamiable creature which I am: once again was I roused to waken the long dormant qualities of

sociability and affection, and a spark of philanthropy was rekindled in my soul.

But the spark was extinguished, the uncharitable gloom again came over me, as soon as the door closed upon my friend. As the sound of his footsteps died away, one by one, upon the staircase,—as the slam of the street-door proclaimed that I was deserted, its sway over me was re-established as rigorously as before.

As to my relations, that is, such as remembered me when I was quite a child, they have now all been long ago dead. Some few cousins I have, but their acquaintance I never courted; they were taught originally to consider me as a strange unsociable character, and therefore had as little wish to know me, as I had to know them. It will be remembered that my relations never were made sensible of such good and agreeable qualities as I possessed, on account of the extreme backwardness which prevented my showing them. The occasion of a pic-nic party in the New Forest, where once on

a time various relatives and acquaintance of mine were met together, will give me an opportunity of reviewing such of them as I best recollect.

CHAPTER IV.

A PIC-NIC PARTY IN THE NEW FOREST.

THERE were present at this *fête champêtre*, the Hon. Miss D——, Lady H——, Sir W. J., Captain Faddle, Mr. L., the Hon. Thomas Erskine, Lord F., Mrs. M——, and various others, whose rank, whose names, or even the initials of them, my old head has long ago forgotten.

The party was a combination of all sorts of features, forms, dispositions, and qualities: gay, grave, stupid, conceited, sententious, cheerful, and discontented: old, young, and middle-aged: beautiful and ugly: fat and lean: sallow and florid: fifteen and sixty-five: “black coats,” and “red coats:” military, and those of the peaceful professions. Amongst the military, was a youth

who was shortly to be married to a vastly plain, but mightily rich damsel, by whose side he sat. The impudence with which he used to swear to every one, that he was desperately in love with her, was most amusing. Never was a farce better sustained, than that which he kept up, of looking lovingly foolish, and amiably embarrassed, (as lovers are wont to do,) when she addressed him, or he spoke to her. He fully deserved the fortune he ultimately obtained: to his red coat, and his cleverness in dissimulation, his success was to be attributed. This same red cloth does wonders: moths are not more attracted by candle light, than moths of another description are by the lustre with which a red coat dazzles them. Byron says truly enough,

“Maidens, like moths, are ever caught by glare.”

The excessively priggish look of a certain strange animal, a fellow of Oriel college, Oxford, next attracts my notice: he was the most marvellously stupid, vapid, dry, and tiresome creature, I ever had the misfortune to encounter.

The extent of this gentleman's information was, the art of framing a Latin hexameter, or citing a derivation from Damm's Greek Lexicon. As his head was as hugely large, as his legs were spindle and bandy, it no doubt contained all the "*crambo—damnimo*" Greek, that the Lexicon possessed. What is the good of literary institutions, if they do not impart some grace to learning? If all they teach a man for the most part is, merely so much of barbarism?—if instead of imparting any polish to his mind, they clog and defile it with the verdigris and rust of pedantry, which if he does not display, he must either hold his tongue, or be content with making the most common-place, childish, and trumpery observations.

This Oriel gentleman was under an engagement of tutoring young Lord F. who had lately left Eton, and was shortly looking forward to entering himself in the college books at Christ-Church.

Lord F. was a sort of youth that would be more inclined to hold cheap the "*pocula sacra*" of Alma Mater, than to court them too greedily.

He had considerable knowledge of the world for his age, and considerable general information ; but, for appearance' sake, he thought it proper to keep a term or two at the University. He amused himself with quizzing histutor,* and flirting with his cousins, the daughters of Lady H—— : when they played, he accompanied them with his voice, which was a good deep tenor.

The great man of the party, was the Hon. Thomas Erskine, not then in his zenith, by some years : many of the poor holiday-folk present, thought him rather too flashy, talkative, and intellectual, to be exactly agreeable to their ordinary capacities.

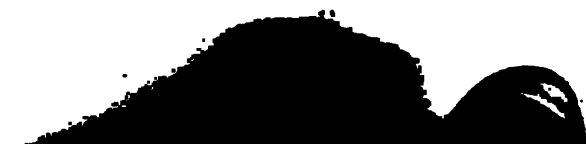
Then there was old Mrs. M——, such a figure ! as grotesque in her appearance, as she was tiresome in her address. She wore an enormous yellow satin bonnet, with a fringe that would have served to border a drawing-room curtain ; red morocco leather boots, with high heels ; her arms stuffed into a white muff of

* This was very reprehensible :—the Author repeats he is no enemy to the Universities themselves, but to the *system* of education encouraged in them.

such a size, that as she raised it up, (in the energy of talking,) to her bosom, it had the effect of a Polar bear-cub, to which she might be imparting the nourishment called "suck." Then her gown, bagging out as it did behind, and bulging forth on each side, by means of two pockets which she wore, (stuffed as full as saddle-bags,) looked so odd! The gown was of blue silk, which, contrasted with the colour of her bonnet and boots, rendered her quite the constellation of the assembly.

She nearly made a gouty old clergyman swear to her face, by descanting for the eight and fortieth time, on the best mode of preparing a whip-syllabub. This was, nevertheless, a matter of some importance, as we looked forward to a regale of some such description, towards the close of the day's festivities—when the milking-time had arrived, and the sun should be shooting its last red rays through the vistas of our woodland banqueting-place.

Amongst other recruits which increased the number of our party, which was constituted entirely on the principle of "the more, the



merrier," we had a half-dandy, half-cit of a person, not very old, nor very young, the second son of an ancient and rich banker. The atmosphere of a counting-house was that which this gentleman breathed ; but from his connection with some few scions of the gay world, he used to lay claim to the air of a man of fashion, talked of his acquaintance in high life, assumed a swagger, (which by-the-by had any effect rather than that which he intended it should have,) and altogether gave himself vast airs. So little do weak minds understand how to demean themselves ; so easily are addle brains turned by any flimsy ideas of consequence.


The man was not so ill-looking, although, to be sure, his face was irredeemably stamped with cockneyism ; and the conceit with which a notion of his own good looks inspired him, infected all that he thought of, said, or did.

This led him to launch forth upon subjects with which he was no more acquainted than the quills which he drove ; he would, at one time, prate upon the arts ; at another, upon politics ; at another, upon the fashions ; not at all dis-

concerted at the blunders he made in each of them, because totally unconscious that he had made any, and totally unable to suppose it possible that he *could* make any.

This want of perception is a shield of brass to ignorance, and an inseparable companion of the grossest kind of conceit; it is a "*robur, et æs triplex*," under which a conceited fool is always sheltered.

The laughter of the party never had the most distant effect of abashing this dandy quill-driver; he imputed the merriment of the table to his own wit, and was happy. He perceived not that he was in any way wavering from the point, when he called Rubens the Master of the *Italian* school; and placed Raphael and Murillo on opposite sides to those which they occupied, of France. He would talk of the cartoons of *Rembrandt*, and admire the *dark, obscure* style of Claude. The yellow tint of this delightful landscape-painter, he would say, was the most beautiful conception of the genius of Ludovico Caracci. Nicholas Poussin he would confound with Nicholas Bacon; and Annibale Caracci



with Hannibal, the Carthaginian. When the glaring vivid colouring of Rubens, and the uncouth proportions of the figures of that most wonderful master were talked of, he would deny the assertion, and declare there was not a painter in all Europe who was so remarkable for the softness of his outline, and delicacy of his touch. Much was he bothered between the Transfiguration and the doctrine of transubstantiation. It is a pity our celebrated mimic had not then been performing; if he had, this sçavant would assuredly have confounded the fame of Carlo Maratti with that of Charles Matthews.

As to politics, his blunders were not less amusing. He would now confound the African slave trade with the American war, taking care to place Africa and America at different sides of the Atlantic, from those on which the map presents them; and the East India Company with the West India planters. When Jamaica was mentioned, he would jumble it together with Java, and Sumatra with Seringapatam.

Sometimes he would hazard a quotation, and

on these occasions, would invariably put into the mouth of Julius Cæsar, some passage that belonged to Romeo, Juliet, or Juliet's nurse. He did not exactly perceive the difference between *Julius* and *Juliet*. Now and then a scrap of Latin would escape him; if so, it was much on a footing with that of Dr. Douse'em, in an earlier part of this work, and was to be referred to the only Latin book he had ever made acquaintance with—not the Grammar of Eton school, but of Westminster; certainly the vilest, most detestable, barbarous compilation of trashy perplexity that ever tortured the unfortunate numsculls of school-boys.


The least interesting, but assuredly the most ridiculous feature in our party, was a small half-pay captain, in stature about three feet three without his shoes; taller, without doubt, than little Jeffrey Hudson, or Count Borolaski, or the little dwarf at Durham, but still a small man. Small men have frequently boasted of having great souls, as Tydeus is represented by the poet,—

“ Tho' small in stature, yet a terrible warrior.”

Not so, however, little Captain Faddle. This military gentleman, of small dimensions, had a head something like that of Sir Hudibras, (as represented in Hogarth's designs) the top of which was thinly sprinkled with hair of a white sandy colour—a vile flaxen shade, that you can never see, without longing to seize a candle and set fire to it. His chief delight was in fancying himself indisposed. His voice, his air, his manner, his very ideas, were all tainted by the infection of his imagined indisposition. The first was broken, faltering, and weak ; the second and third were languid and lethargic, or sometimes merely placid and subdued ; the fourth (his ideas) were always employed in contemplating the dryness or dampness of the spot in which he happened to be, or considering the wholesome or unwholesome nature of whatever was put before him to eat or drink. He had in his lifetime been one short campaign ; but the enterprizes, “ the hairbreadth 'scapes,” the “ din of battle,” its feats and its glories, had not the charm for him, which they may have for others. His placid disposition required milder scenes,

more gentle treatment ; not the soldier's rugged life, but one which was sweetened by repose. In the course of his campaign, he had managed to pick up a small smattering of French. This was considered, "at that time of day," no inconsiderable acquirement. The captain's smattering was, nevertheless, very limited ; but of what he was possessed, he made the most, and took care to introduce the few words he knew, whenever an opportunity was afforded him. But with this acquirement, such as it was, he was not content ; he thought proper to affect a contempt for his own language ; in fact, to forget it : and the consequence was, that he *did* forget a great deal of it—both of its idioms and of its pronunciation. For, in affecting to speak English like a foreigner, he at length spoke no language at all, but a bad lisping jargon of broken French and English.

His attitude at the table was most amusing ; he sat with one hand in his breast, the other raised to his forehead, his body leaning back in his seat, with a sickly, sad expression in his



features, 'as if courting the commiseration of every soul in the party. Some one or other addressed him—"Captain, you don't seem well to-day."

"No, Gode *blisse* mai soul, I note well, du tout, du tout,—très très indisposé,—pon mai vârd,—o'dear! I vas out te oter day wid Strutter,—Major Strutter—it vas yisterday marn'ing—you connaissez de man.—Eh bien! I shook like de aspen leaf, mais de mauvais sujet, he niver, niver, utter de moindre môt de compassion: o' de hard heart."

"Well, that was ill-natured and inconsiderate, to be sure."

"Yis, noting annays me more, dan dat sort of ting: it make me to shudder, oui, to shudder: cela me fait frissonner; oui: Oh dear! oh dear—vous comprenez la sensation: ah! vous la comprenez bien.—Hah, my side! Oh! my Gode!—I *niver* do get over dat spasmodic affection! *niver, niver*, no!—Oh! ah! oh! ah! oh!"

"Come, you had better drink a glass of wine,

and eat a little of this pasty—venison pasty—fit food for foresters, as we are at present—Come !”

“ Lurd ! now, you do offer me *pasty* ! oh ! de tick, heavy, doughy stuff ! no ! no ! a leetle *marsil* of *dat* bailed chicken, if you please, si vous plait,—*Pasty* ! Oh ! dear, Oh ! dear ! why man, do you tink my stomich is made de fer, Oh ! what do you tink it made of ? You fancy it have digestion of de *harse*, de *cheval* : it annays me to tink you not have any feeling ; Oh ! dear—a leetle bailed chicken ”

“ I assure you, Captain, something more solid would do you good : you do not take sufficient nourishment,—boiled chicken is not proper support for a military man.”

“ Not proper support ! how de fellow does talk ! Oh dear—Oh ! mon Dieu !—why one would suppose I was as strong as de muraille de la Chine : why, my goot man, do look at *mai* waist. Blisse ye, ye could draw me through a ring ! Oh ! mai poor poitrine—ah dat spasm ! it be de deat of me, of poor Capitaine Faddle, *von* of

dese days: un jour, un jour, he die from de pain !”

“ I must indeed, Captain,” interrupted Lady H——, “ tell you my mind, respecting your condition, that I think you a sad coddle :—and this is the fault of all you men ; you are such insufferable coddles ! When any little inconvenience annoys you, it is quite distressing to see the fuss you make about it ; not to use harsher language. Does but a finger ache of Lord H——’s right hand, the whole house is put into confusion ! Such complaints are reiterated, such long representations made, such exaggerations of shooting pains, and communicative stitches, and spasms in all quarters ; such a deliberation on James’s powder, calomel, and blisters ; such a shuffling over the pages of “ Buchan’s Medicine,” that one would suppose the poor man was attacked with some irremediable calamity, to dissipate which, the prayers of a nation would be necessary, and the quackery of all the doctors in Christendom !”

“ Pshow ! Pshow ! yare ladysheep is run-

ning on most unreasonably—ye are, indeed,—*vraiment, vraiment, pon mai ward*, if Lard H—— had suffered de illnesses dat *ave* distressed me—he would complain *vid* just cause—dat he would! but *vat* is *his* maladie, *ten* compared avec la mienne; c'est très injuste to call me coddle, because my Lard H—— is *von*: je n'aime pas cela. Ah! non! non!"

"I beg your pardon, Captain," rejoined Lady H——, "I conceive your malady not to be a whit more serious or dangerous than Lord H——'s. What! *you* a Captain, bred up, as the nursery-song says, "to fight for George our king"—why you are only fit to be made a Chelsea pensioner of! or to be a page in waiting to some modern Omphalè, who would pet and pamper you."

"*Yare* ladysheep is très très cruelle; *vary*, *vary*, unkind indeed: if you had caught de ague, I *was* afflicted *vid*, in de traversé, de dat carsed marsh,—Romeney Marsh,—I do mean, *yare* ladysheep would not talk in *dīs* unfeeling façon; no, no, dat you would not. You *vary* unkind, 'pon my *vard*."

“No, Captain, I am no such thing; but I assure you it provokes me to see men forget themselves so, and whimper and whine, and fidget and pester every body near them, because their head or their side may chance to ache; which it, in all probability, does not. Why *we* don't make all this fuss! we poor women keep our grievances to ourselves, or at any rate do not behave so selfishly as you men, and make every body wretched, because we suffer a little indisposition.”

“Ah! dear, dear, dear, me! *yare* ladysheep is, I repeat it again, and again, *vary* unreasonable; *du tout* amiable, *du tout*, *vary* mush unkind; Oh dear, yes, you are! I not like to see *dat*; some leetle respect do always be shown to *de vrai* malade; ah! my side—ah!—oh!”

Her ladysheep did not continue to banter the poor little military man any further, since he evidently took the matter very much to heart; so much so, that he sat in perfect silence for the rest of the day, assuming a romantic and languid abjectness, which he conceived irresistibly interesting. Outwardly, he affected to

be overcome by his weakness ; but in his bosom—" within his warlike breast"—there festered deep and venomous dudgeon against his antagonist, Lady H——; it put him out of humour with every body present, and most assuredly must have done so with himself. The only things which he was capable of doing, were those of taking snuff, and sipping a little cold punch, then the fashionable beverage in all these *fêtes champêtres*.

Lady H——'s daughters sung and played delightfully—not the Italian airs that are now so elegantly and softly trilled at evening parties, but simple lively songs, English and Scotch. These girls used to amuse themselves with teasing poor Captain Faddle;—(every body, indeed, used to quiz him, either before his face, or behind his back,)—they used to call him Marlbrook, and Amadis-de-Gaul, and Orlando Furioso, and " the brave Roland," and the warrior Cid, and Sir Bevis, and the Knight of the rueful Countenance, and the Squire of Dames; in addition to which, they would sing songs reflecting on his condi-

tion and absurdities; or tell some story of a fretful knight, who was confined to his couch from a wound received in combat with a giant, and attended by his lady-love. One would offer to bind up his head with a scarf; another said, she had been culling simples, to boil into a pleasant drink for the strengthening of his inside, or had been directing the village-leech to prepare an ointment of lard and chipped parsley, to allay the smart of such bruises as the giant's club had inflicted. One begged to unloose his helmet; the other hoped he would but raise his vizor, that she might gaze on his warlike countenance; then her sister would demand, if the coat of mail had left any impression on his ribs, and beg to feel for the dent; a further inquiry would seek an explanation of the sensation of having the knees trepanned in plates of steel. In fact, they were really extremely provoking; and the more so were they, inasmuch as their mother, by always laughing at their tricks, used to encourage them to proceed. The unhappy Faddle was enraged out of all patience by these

attacks; the words "morbleu!" and other asseverations, would shower thickly from his lips; and he would declare, in his most vehement tone, that "he wished sincerely he was in any *varld* but *dis*—*weder de* lower or *de* upper, was perfectly immaterial to him; for as to *de* *farst*, he already had a soupçon of it: for he suffered daily, and nightly too, *de* *tarments* of *de* damned!"

The evening was passed in dancing reels and country dances. Not all the modern graces of the quadrille are so pleasing to my eye as the lively old English country-dances.—The "Triumph,"—"Hands-across,—down the middle,—up again,—poussette,"—and other figures. I love the sound of Sir Roger de Coverly better than all the "L'Eté's," and "Pastorales," and "Poules," that are the rage of modern ball-rooms. I am aware this is prejudice, for there is no doubt, that in a public dance, a more slow and elegant movement is better than a scuffle and a romp. Still I am unalterably attached to the figures which I remember longest—in which I have held the hand of Ellen.

As for our old minuets, I always thought them too much of an exhibition; they were in the opposite extreme to the country-dance—too stiff, slow, and formal. Unless a man was a very well-shaped and handsome person, it was by no means agreeable to stand up and twirl slowly about, and bow, and pace, with the chin erect, and the knees stiffened, in the presence of a multitude of gazers, all quizzing him most unmercifully.

I have now and then suffered myself to undergo the constraint of this minuet-ceremonial, but would assuredly much rather have had to drill an awkward squad in the capacity of sergeant, with a great black japan stock under my chin, and other constraints of dress and carriage.

In those great assembly-rooms at Bath, this dance was a most formidable undertaking, and many people used to be deterred from practising it at all, on that account. The dread of the exhibition has now, for some years, occasioned its abandonment. When no one would stand up to dance it, the master of the ceremonies was

obliged to do so himself, and strut about for the good of the public. There was nobody in the kingdom, at the time of which I am speaking, who performed a minuet with more grace, ease, and dignity, than the Prince of Wales, our present gracious Sovereign.

I never think of Bath without a sigh ; it was of all places, in the season of its gaiety, the most delightful. Not very long ago I paid it a visit, in order to bathe in the hot spring for the benefit of my rheumatized joints ; the sight of the place made me unhappy. The Sydney gardens were no longer crowded with the gay and elegant groups which once constituted their attraction. The walks were vacant and melancholy. The same vacuity shed a gloom over the assembly-rooms—the most beautiful of any in the country. Other causes too had I for the heart-ache, in the contemplation of this spot : other regrets more heartfelt, more deep than any that could be awakened by the idea of assemblies or promenades, the din of gaiety, or the glitter of fashion.

CHAPTER V.

A CONTINUATION OF THE LAST CHAPTER

BUT ONE.

WHAT other acquaintance I may have had in the course of my life, under the appellation of friendship, has been very limited ; death has cut off the greater portion of it. One or two old women, whom at one time I knew as handsome young girls, I still see now and then, and like as well as I can like any thing. I have an old sister too ; but none of these have much friendship for me. Old people, whether men or women, are all grossly selfish, and care about nobody but themselves ; therefore, I may judge what their feelings are towards me, by

those which I entertain with respect to themselves.

As to elderly men, if they are married and happy I am envious of them, and therefore hate them. Their condition conveys a reproach to myself, which is intolerable. If they are married and *unhappy*, I hate them less to be sure; but still my dislike to them is strong, inasmuch as I think them fools for not having rescued themselves from celibacy to some better purpose. As for pitying them, it is out of the question; no such feeling as pity finds entrance at my breast. The world has no pity for me; why should I, how *can* I, have any for the world?

All unmarried men, whether middle aged or old, I hate; in either I see my own unhappy career, in its different stages, reflected; and the sight of myself distresses me, in whatever way reflected. In the first of these I trace the subtle and silent growth of all the nasty dissocial habits which I have myself contracted; in the last I view all those habits confirmed.

In youth a thousand attributes are a cause of



envy to the aged: besides the enjoyment of animal spirits, and the smiles of the fair, I envy the young their wild heedlessness of danger, their love of enterprize and adventure, their generosity of feeling, and that magnanimity which exists in youths of fine spirit—their benevolence of heart, their compassion, sincerity, and frankness.

I can scarcely believe that *I* was ever generous, charitable, and warm-hearted, so uncompassionate as I now am; so uncharitable. Where are all those generous, kind, warm-hearted impulses that once swayed my soul? Was it *natural* to me to be unkind, ungenerous, and uncharitable? No! Alas! why did Providence so check my honest ardour, so mock the struggles of my ambition, as to drive me, in the vexation of my spirit, to rebel against the good, and great feelings too, with which it originally gifted me,—to rebel against itself?—The dispensation was indeed hard.

If my spirit had not been irritated with those reverses of which my life has been full, I should have been a completely different being from

that which I have turned out : I should have been a social, generous, and charitable man. Instead of carping at other men's success, I should have rejoiced at it ; instead of mocking at their distresses, my hand would have been stretched out to assist and support them. I should have wiped the tear from the eye of sorrow ; have uttered words of comfort to the afflicted spirit. But no comfort, no consolation, was ever extended, or even offered, to me ? I was never taught this lesson of charity by man or providence either : how can I then practise it, how can I be expected to do so ? My spirit was irritated by misfortune into rancour and opposition.—I know that the contemplation of such a condition of mind as this, must be dreadful to any virtuous person ; but the nature of this work demands that the exposition of myself, to the very inmost workings of my heart, should be ample and explicit. I know that man should bow with submission to the dispensations of Providence, however inadequately our virtuous endeavours may seem to be rewarded. But my spirit was ever fond of opposition, and

impatient of control, of which it was most keenly sensible; and when its fortune was adverse, it was unable to bow with submission while it burned to oppose.

From this sort of accursed refractoriness of spirit has arisen one of the worst of my habits, a constant and malignant railing at all that passes before me, whether of the ordinances of man or Heaven. I walk along the street—I execrate the population, the immensity of the crowd, in which I am jostled and knocked about, my ribs battered and my shins bruised. I exclaim, while smarting under the pain, “Would to God there were some check on this pestilent overflow of people! a strangulation of infants at the birth,” . . . or some other horrid expedient, not worth mentioning. I, myself, shudder at the thought of so much malignity and venom, while I relate it.

Again, when I see the misery depicted in the countenances of many—the maimed and wretched bodies of some—the squalid appearance of poverty, barefooted, filthy, and in rags—the miserable children howling round their agonized

parent, and crying out for the bread, which she has not to give them; I cannot refrain from hastily demanding, what was the good of creating such a mass of misery, as this world exhibits? Where is the benefit of creating beings, whether they will or not, to drag out a life of wretchedness, and to curse their existence, every succeeding day of it? However virtuously inclined, however diligent in their vocations, we see them galled with the most oppressive burdens of anguish, both mental and bodily.

“Is this,” I would say, “the part of mercy? Is there even any mercy in telling us, that if we behave well under these inflictions, we shall in time be rewarded with eternal bliss, when, the same time, there is a certain menace of eternal damnation. But why create men with even a chance of eternal damnation and torment?—why, were it not better there should be no such chance of misery and punishment at all? And is not the *chance* almost a certainty, when men are made so frail, so weak and sinful in their nature, that whether they will or no,

they *must* be wicked and deserving of punishment, rather than reward? So that their chance of damnation is a hundred to one against that of their bliss?"

Religion and philosophy execrate all such abominable ventilations of spleen. I repeat it, that while I describe them, I execrate them; but let me assure the reader, the only motive that has actuated me in doing so, is to unmask the heart of malignity and venom, which is too often possessed by morose old gentlemen, like myself.

What is more abominable still, is, that there is a positive gratification in the indulgence of all this rancour. Heavens! how pitiable and shocking a tone of mind.

CHAPTER VI.

THE OLD BACHELOR ON HIS WAY HOME THROUGH
OXFORD.

A MORE strange-looking set of persons than such as I used to meet in the promenades at Cheltenham, I scarcely ever saw before: there were so many prodigiously jaundiced countenances; so many unwholesome complexions; such a curious mixture of inflation and meagerness. Yet I am confident that none of all the number of oddities I met with, was a more fit subject for being quizzed and stared at than myself.

Two old maiden ladies were there amongst the herd, looking uncommonly cross: they

opened their eyes very widely whenever they passed by me, as if they recollected my countenance. I fancied, too, that I remembered theirs, though much disguised by wrinkles and ill-humour; therefore there was not much to induce me to wish for a recognition. I am inclined to think they were the identical persons upon whose air and manner as girls, I have criticised, as stamped with the character of a school-education.

In passing through Woodstock, I was agreeably surprised, by finding in the features of a ruddy buxom-looking old dame, those of the pretty Monmouthshire rustic, with whom I had passed such pastoral hours on the banks of the Wye.

She kept a small inn, at which I stopped to bait the horses; as I forget her name, I shall call her Mrs. Homespun.

"Do you remember me, Mrs. Homespun?" I said.

"No, Sir," said she, curtseying; "I don't know that I ever saw you before."


"Do you remember ever having lived near

the river Wye? Do you remember a young man coming to fish there for some time? the young gentleman that. . . .”

“Oh Lord bless me, Sir, so I do! who would have thought, that you and he should have been the same person? Ah! those were not such hard times as these are.”

The poorer classes always begin whining and (frequently with reason) about the “*hardness*” of present times; which, however, I did not permit my old friend Dame Homespun to do; but cut her complaining short, by inquiring into her history, which ended by her calling her husband to pay his respects to the gentleman “of whom he had heard her talk.”

A stout, hale, old man, shortly made his appearance; but as I found he was uncommonly deaf, I was too impatient to change many words with him. He was accompanied by a sturdy tall man of about thirty years old: he, as I understood from Mrs. Homespun, was her son. He bore some resemblance to myself. . . . I say no more. . . youth will be indiscreet. . . I took my eyes off his face: and bethought



me of old Matthew Bramble, and Humphrey Clinker.

I drank a draught of Mrs. Homespun's ale, for the sake of "auld lang syne," and returned her the jug with a guinea at the bottom. The old man was still bowing, and she was still curtsying, and expressing her hope I should always stop at her house, when I passed that way, when the postillion cracked his whip, and the carriage rolled away. Mrs. Homespun's ale sent me to sleep, till I was awakened by the stopping of the carriage before the Angel Inn Oxford.

The first thing I did after my arrival was to call upon my acquaintance of Merton College. As is always the case, he was "just thinking of me," as I entered the room. After a few preliminary inquiries had passed between us, I turned to the subject of the MSS. which I had left for his perusal.

"What do you think of it?" I said.

"Why I can scarcely tell, until I have seen what is to follow—have you written any more?"

"Oh, yes; I have finished it, all but a few.

pages ; and I 'll tell you what I will do, if you have no objection—I will send it you from the inn, and come and hear your opinion of it at dinner-time.”

“ I shall be most happy. Come, then, at six o'clock—you will find dinner ready, and I have just now got some excellent old hock. We will talk over the MSS. in the evening.”

Accordingly I returned to the inn, and sent him the remainder of the work ; after which I strolled about, looking at the colleges, and fell in with that curious dirty little mortal,—Demetriades, the Greek, who has lately died, as I understand, very rich for his situation.

I was soon tired with walking, and was glad to retire to my room, and take a nap till it was time to go to Merton. My eyes had not been closed above ten minutes before they were compelled to open by a whining noise, which startled me. At first I fancied it was occasioned by gnats ; but on removing the handkerchief which I had placed over my face, what was my surprise on seeing my discarded housekeeper, Mrs. Barbara Busby, before me, penitent, sup-

plicating, and in tears. At first I spoke excessively gruffly to her, demanding why she had chased me to Oxford? and how she could possibly suppose I should ever alter the resolution I had taken of having nothing more to do with her? but I was induced gradually to soften my tone; her entreaties for forgiveness being so piteous, and her promises so vehement of amendment in future.

The truth is, when I dismissed her, I had been a good deal influenced by the impertinent insinuation of that ass Sir Methusalem, as to the equivocal station which she occupied in my service; but I now looked upon any such suggestion with scorn, and felt ashamed I had paid any attention to it; besides, it was my maxim to hold the opinion of the world and all impertinent persons in it, at defiance, and in contempt. Other reasons too weighed with me in taking back Mrs. Busby into my service. I had been at great inconvenience since she had left me; and no doubt she suspected that this would be the case, when she set out to endeavour to re-establish herself in my good

graces. In fact I felt very glad to take her back ; and really when I took into consideration the whole series of her conduct, her good qualities and useful services very much outbalanced her derelictions,—her occasional whimperings, officiousness, or cant.

So it was agreed, that Mrs. Busby should take her place in the carriage, the next morning, by my side as before. The reconciliation on her part was ended by a prodigious fit of blubbering, in the middle of which I withdrew, it being nearly the time appointed for dinner.

During dinner, we talked about the society at the Universities ; the improvements at Oxford ; the disfigurement occasioned to the place, by the trumpery little cockney buildings, which now block up the entrance to it from the London road. Many regrets were uttered concerning the increase of population, which demanded all this increase of building. Then we talked about the days, when we had been students at law ; and, at an earlier date, companions at college. Part of our confabulation was, as far as I remember it, to the following effect :—

“ You have a strange mawkish set here ;” I observed, in my surly way ; “ somewhat outlandish too !—eh ? On the monkish system ?—Uh ! hum, ah ?”

“ Mawkish enough, and monkish enough, in many instances ; but there are some pleasant fellows in Merton here, and some men of the world. I like passing an evening too, at All Souls’, or New College, now and then.”

“ But you must surely regret that you quitted either of the active professions you successively followed, to live here, in a region of so much insipidity ? I could never have tolerated a college life, myself ; I had too much ambition, independently of my natural restlessness.”

“ But,” interrupted Lentulus, “ what has your ambition come to ?”

“ What has it come to, indeed,” I rejoined : “ I might as well have been a droning college fellow, shut out from all intercourse with the world, as run a wild goose chase after fame, and then shrink from it, to shut up myself voluntarily, as I have done.”

“ Well, it is of little avail regretting what can-

not be amended ; there are many in the same situation. I myself was not without my ambition ; but whenever I am inclined to feel regret, I console myself with considering, that I enjoy what my ambition might possibly never have gained for me—plenty to live upon ; and then, I cannot but thank God, that at any rate, though an insignificant being on the face of the earth, I am still independent.”

“ Ay, and life too, decorated with all its honours, so soon passes away ! And then, to him who enjoyed them, what can it matter whether he ever possessed them or not ? Besides, as to honours in this world—Lord ! how limited they are ; how common too, since how many possess them. Though decorated with every distinction, we are but a speck, after all, amidst the vast shoals of our fellow-men.”

“ It is very true ; let any individual, however distinguished, consider how trifling the extent of his fame is amongst the myriads of his fellow-creatures, and he must shrink at his own insignificance, so many are there as great as himself ;

so few, comparatively speaking, who know anything about him."

After a few moments silence, during which the dinner things were being removed, I resumed the conversation.

"It is time now, that I should ask you again about my Confessions: have you read them through?"

"Yes, indeed I have; and have been since contemplating them very attentively."

"I am impatient to hear your reflections on them."

"You must not be offended, if I say that you have certainly drawn a very true portrait of yourself, at least as far as I have been able to judge, since the renewal of our acquaintance."

"Speak on," I interrupted; "I am not offended. You don't think the portrait a very amiable one, you would wish further to observe."

"Certainly it is not; but I must give you credit for doing more than many persons in your situation would have done; for contemplating your own singularities so philosophi-

cally, and exposing them so candidly. I really am of opinion, that very few persons, situated as you are, would be inclined to do as much."

"Fools!" I exclaimed, "why every body about them is well conscious of their singularity, and unamiability, whether they themselves confess it or not. It is well to acknowledge it boldly; for my part, I care not who knows what I am. Well, what have you to remark?"

"Why, that being such a fastidious being as you describe yourself; so restless and discontented, it is fortunate that you never married; you would have driven your wife mad. It is a pity you could not have remained single without contracting so many odd whims and habits; but these seem inseparable from a state of celibacy."

"Ah!—there you're right; but the *extent* to which they may be carried, depends a good deal on the disposition of a man: mine is such, that whether married or single, I should always have been whimsical, eccentric, and morose; and therefore, as that is the case, it is as well that I have suffered my unhappy qualities to be

an annoyance to myself alone, rather than to any other person also, to whom I might have allied myself. What think you?"

"There is reason, certainly, in what you say: as I have said, in *your* peculiar case, I think it well that you have not married; but, generally speaking, I consider that matrimony, in forcing domestic habits upon a man, must have a salutary effect in counteracting those of an unsocial nature, to which he may be inclined; and therefore, in many instances, prevents the contraction of many bad habits, and lessens some that may be already contracted." I dropped my jaw, and fell to pondering; Lentulus sat still and poked the fire; at last I started up, and, looking at my watch, said I must now be leaving him. I shook his hand, and wished him a good night.

Barbara and myself set off rather early the next morning, as I was anxious to arrive in London by dinner-time. As I was stepping into the carriage, I observed at a little distance from the inn a bevy of gowmsmen laughing in

the most unrestrained manner. My eye soon singled from their number the impudent varlet, Sir Methusalem Goosewit's grandson. I was not at a loss to understand the subject of their merriment; my choler rose, and I could with pleasure have seen them all soundly horse-whipped.

When on the road, I discussed the merits of the remarks of Mrs. Conyers and Lentulus, relative to myself: they were contradictory; and I was puzzled as to which I should consider the most just. I ought, by the by, to recollect that the last-named of these persons has seen more of my work than the reader; it shall, therefore, be continued to its conclusion.

CHAPTER VII.

*(Confessions resumed.)*HABITS OF ACTING—BEING A CONTINUATION
OF CHAPTER III.


Now for a charming picture of domestic comfort.—At about twelve o'clock my house-keeper enters my bedroom, and opens the shutters: the light startles me; I demand what the hour is, although I know it well enough, inasmuch as I put the same question, and receive the same answer, every succeeding morning from one year's end to another.

After another drowsy interrogatory respecting the weather, I tell her to bring breakfast. Behold me sitting up in bed, in a chequered

jacket of chintz, with a black velvet cap decorated with a tassel; a somewhat brown bit of flannel round my throat, to prevent my catching cold; my back supported by cushions taken from the couch, and pillows, indiscriminately.

A tray with the breakfast things is brought, and placed on my lap, the breakfast consists of chocolate or coffee, in a small brown Wedgwood-ware pot, a few sippets of toast, and, in the season, of a plate of strawberries in addition. There is also tea, in case I should prefer it, in a little round chased silver pot, which is a favourite with me, and an endless cause of upbraiding my housekeeper, should the least scratch or speck be discernible on its surface.

Over this repast I generally dawdle for about an hour and a quarter; fiddling with the butter, or doubting whether I shall demolish my toast by sopping it or by eating it with butter. Sometimes, in a fit of nervousness, I shoot out a leg or an arm, and upset the whole apparatus. This mishap causes me to throw myself on my back, after pulling the bell violently for my maid, cursing my exist-



ence, and venting my rage in oaths and lamentations on my own infirmity and the necessity of breakfasting.

By the time the disorder is remedied, and the breakfast re-established on my lap, my rage cools; and if by good luck I am not attacked by any more nervous twitches or plungings, I get through this second edition of breakfast without much discomfort, except it be occasioned by peevishness at the toast being too brown or too flabby, or the chocolate smoked, or the coffee a little too thick, the butter not quite fresh, the salt a little damp, or some such other laudable cause of objection.

After many efforts, much yawning and stretching, much shuddering if the weather is at all cold, I crawl out at that side of my bed which is nearest the fire-place; my course is directed to a huge arm chair, with a high back, which stands close by the fender.

Here I sit in my bed-gown and slippers, frequently for two or three hours, contemplating and grumbling, by turns, both at myself and things in general.

In contemplating, I sit with my legs stretched out, a foot resting on each hob; my mouth open, sometimes even drivelling like an infant, and my eyes fixed upon an angry coal flickering with gas.

Suddenly I start from my reverie, and throw myself into a grumbling posture. My legs are drawn close up to each other, or crossed; my eyes are directed towards my own shrunk shanks; my chin is poked forward; and my upper lip and left nostril screwed up on one side of my face, into a diabolical sardonic grin.

At length arrives the odious penance of dressing: often and often have I, through dread of the operation, put it off and off, as I did matrimony, till it was too late to undertake it—until the hour of going out or dining was long past, and it was nearly time to go to bed again.

However, we will suppose that I have summoned up courage sufficient to plunge myself into the operation; we will suppose that at last, after a multitude of imprecations—after hacking my chin in various places in shaving—after

nearly throttling myself with rage in attempting to tie on my neckcloth—after breaking one or two water-glasses, and cutting my fingers with the jagged fragments, plastering the cuts with goldbeater's skin that will not stick, and sticking-plaister which at length will—after perspiring, straining, and puffing, for a painful quarter of an hour, in tugging on my boots—I sally forth:—what a figure do I present!

My feet and ankles, as I have just said, are accoutred in boots—ugly things, which come up to about the middle of my calf, on the outside of a pair of pepper-and-salt pantaloons; these I wear very loose about the loins and in front, where they hang in thick dingy folds, like a row of sand-bags made of grey drugget. My waistcoat is double-breasted, and reaches down to a considerable length below the diaphragm, with huge pockets bordered with blue cloth.

Over this comes my coat, made very large and baggy, for fear it should press too closely on my rheumatic elbows and shoulders; the skirts are of a portentous length, reaching nearly down to my ankles.

This, again, is surmounted by a surtout, or short body spencer, of olive brown cloth, rather rusty now from wear, with one capacious pocket inside, facing the left breast, serving as a depository for a rumpled green silk handkerchief.

My head being bald, is protected by a wig, which, *in propriis naturalibus*, is called "a brown scratch." This I was once whimsical enough to embellish with a coating of bear's grease and powder; and my maid Barbara having aired it before the fire, from an idea that it was damp, it assumed very much the appearance presented by a platter of potted meat. This absurdity I committed out of opposition to my hair-dresser, who declared that brown scratch wigs were never powdered.

On the top of this wig is placed a little shallow-crowned hat, something like a dish appropriated to pish-pash. Thus accoutred, and holding in my hand a long stick of yellow bilious-looking bamboo, I crawl along the pavement. I see the young men, as I pass, amusing themselves at my expense: the eye of one fixes itself on my hat; of another on my pantaloons; of a

third on my boots, my spencer, or my old-fashioned cane. All this quizzing makes me furious; but I can do no more than show my teeth, like a snarling terrier. I have not philosophy enough to bear these jokes with good humour; and the fret that it costs me in summing up resolution to walk down the street, puts me into a fever whenever I attempt to do so.

My haunts are a snuff shop, an old book shop, an old print shop, and the room of a medallist. When I have exhausted my visits to these places, I repair to the house of my club. There my time is sometimes spent, till two or three o'clock the next morning, in conning newspapers, and the magazines of Campbell, and Christopher North; in eating, drinking, sipping liqueur, dozing, taking snuff, listening to what other people are saying around me, and inwardly sneering at their remarks as common-place, vulgar, prejudiced, or absurd. It amuses me to look at a person on his entrance into the coffee-room, and pass sentence on his character by his physiognomy, with a view to finding out, by what I hear him say,

whether the sentence I passed was a just one or not. I generally condemn people by their looks, at first sight, without mercy; and am then sure to pervert all they say, be it sensible or otherwise, in order to make my sentence on their minds coincide with that which I had passed on their countenances.

A MOMENT'S INTERRUPTION IN THE NARRATIVE.

However impatient the reader may be, I must nevertheless interrupt him, to read to him a paragraph which caught my eye in the newspaper, as I stopped in my way from Oxford, to change horses at High Wycombe.

"On Thursday night last, the house of Mr. ———, in B—— street, was broken open, and robbed of plate and furniture to the amount of some hundred pounds: we are sorry that every effort to apprehend the villains has hitherto proved ineffectual."

"There! I told you how it would be! this comes of your leaving the house in charge of a wretched helpless creature like Giles! look there, Mrs. Busby; read that paragraph. I am ready to go mad! the plate stolen! and the

furniture stolen! Oh gracious! what a fool I was to leave home!—it is all your fault.”

While I was running on with these exclamations, my housekeeper was quietly reading the paragraph.

“Well! have you finished it?” I cried.

“Yes Sir,” said she; “but I do not see why you should be alarmed: you cannot be certain that *your* house has been robbed: there is no number mentioned to the house; nor is it sure, at all, that the dash stands in the place of your name.”

“Fiddlesticks! I hate such nonsense! I tell you I’m sure that my house is meant, and no other; and my name, and no other: because I am always more unlucky than any one else. Does the paragraph give the name of the street?”

“Yes, Sir; but then what does that signify, unless the number of the house is given as well.”

“Pooh! pooh! the name of the street is quite sufficient information to make me sure that there is no one else in it but myself who could meet with ill luck.”

“Well, Sir, it is of no use to fret and dis-

compose yourself: hope for the best; now, I dare lay any money *your* house has not been robbed."

"Pshaw! pshaw! pshaw!—pooh! pooh!—provoking! plate and furniture! to the amount of some hundred pounds! All my property! ——"

"Hope for the best, Sir, now do—hope for the best."

"Hope! what nonsense you silly women talk!—what have I ever gained by hoping?—Nonsense! do not talk such stuff: would to heaven the journey were over, and I knew the worst!"

Mrs. Busby held her tongue, seeing it was useless to offer me any more consolatory suggestions. I grumbled the whole way to town, without intermission.

To return to the coffee-room of my club-house.

NARRATIVE RESUMED.

I sit constantly in one place: the waiter knows my whim, and secures my seat for me.

In summer, it is by the window ; in winter, near the fire-place—if possible, in a corner. There I sit, hatching venom like a spider, surrounded with a cobweb of prejudices and dislikes, in which I entangle every body who enters the room.


By the list of resorts which I have mentioned as my afternoon lounges, it will be seen that I still have some taste left for the elegancies of art and literature. In spite of my departure in youth from the path of erudition, I always loved, and still love, to linger near the spot sacred to the Muses. My most amiable moments are spent in conversing on curious works of art with their respective collectors and connoisseurs.

I buy, indeed, nothing of them : what little money I have, I retain for such comforts as my wretched person stands in need of, and those numerous demands which increasing old age makes upon my purse, as I grow more and more decrepid.

I am not naturally avaricious, though I may be a little so inclined now : but I feel that the

time is past in which it can be worth while to spend any money in elegancies or luxuries—such as rare books, engravings, coins, or other baubles, which cheat men of the miseries of life. Hence, I merely chat with these respectable rarity-venders, and they are all glad to see me,—for I have, in times past, been no bad customer.

As a child, I loved to hunt after coins and medals: my taste was eagerly directed to the curiosities of art; and I was a complete antiquarian in embryo at ten years old. A picture, in Rapin's History of England, of the old coins of the country, excited my desire for the pursuit: the book was unfolded at a stall. Well do I remember the curiosity with which I contemplated the old English letter on the coin. I have still a few favourite medals: a head of Alexander, some few rose nobles, some silver coins of Athens, and an Egyptian coin or two, form the sum of all that remain of my collection. The rest have been disposed of to Matthew Young, the medallist, under the influence of a sudden fit of melancholy, in which



I resolved on keeping nothing that I once loved, as it made me wretched by recalling the enjoyments of years gone by.

My collection of engravings is equally diminished. An Albert Durer, (a very fine impression,) a set of Hogarths, and one or two Guidos, are all I possess. My library is similarly scanty; a Boydell's Shakespear,* a Pine's Horace, bound in red morocco, and a few Elzevirs, which were all favourites, are the only good books I have.


These few relics I con over now and then after breakfast; and on these occasions it is, that my dressing is deferred to the late period at which I am obliged to give it up altogether.

I have a room which Barbara calls the drawing-room: it ought, with more propriety, to be called the lumber-room. Books, folio, octavo, and duodecimo, old magazines, old newspapers, old china, old delf, conundrums

* I spell our great poet's name as it ought to be spelt, not as stupid commentators have done. Let them look at any old books of English families. The name is Shakespear, not Shaks-peare.

of all descriptions and sizes, medicine-vials and Champagne-bottles, old breeches, old boots, things new and things ancient, some just sent home from the manufacturer's, some that have been lying there for years—all in one mass of confusion, are strewed about the chamber.

If I want any article from this mass, I can scarcely ever get at it : if I want a dessert-plate, for instance, it must be rummaged up from the bottom of a heap of furniture of a different kind. If a new window-blind or pair of shoes is sent home, it is thrown down any where and neglected at the time, till it is at length hidden by a heap of articles of more recent arrival, flung upon it with similar carelessness. I fancy this is as much my fault as my domestic's ; for I am never very particular about the order in which my things are, so long as I feel that they are all safe together. If I had a better servant, these things might, perhaps, be better managed : but I have had so many careless, knavish valets-de-chambre in my time, that when I dismissed the last, I was determined never to be troubled with another ; so



that my establishment consists only of Barbara, a scrub of a boy to brush my shoes and coats, and a rather pretty girl to wash the dishes.— Of these two last-mentioned domestics, I know not whether I shall not shortly be obliged to dismiss one, as I understand they carry on flirtations in the dust-hole, when they ought to be attending to their duty. The girl's place cannot be a very hard one ; for I seldom dine at home. The talents of my cook do not extend to preparing such delicacies as my palate often desires : therefore, when I have been too indolent to go to my club to dine, I have also been willing to go without dinner at home, contenting myself with sponge-cake and a bottle of Hock, Burgundy, or Champagne.

Once I made Barbara attempt to stew some sturgeon in claret ; and in truth the woman succeeded better than I could have expected : but never shall she do so again ; for the nervousness under which I laboured for fear she should not succeed, nearly drove me frantic.

I must confess, I think a good deal about

eating; I enjoy it excessively. One way in which I have managed to lose some of my acquaintance, has been by the disgust occasioned by my greediness. If the dinner has been good, the pleasure I evinced at the sight of the dishes, the eagerness with which I scrutinized them, the devotion with which I have pored over the contents of my plate, the voracity with which I have emptied it, was surely sufficient to disgust any one in the least degree particular: if the dinner chanced to be a bad one, the ill-humour depicted on my countenance was not less than that which I betrayed in all I said: so that in either case I made myself equally odious and disagreeable; people were equally disinclined to have a second trial of my company; and so their acquaintance with me was dropped.

I am not much hurt by this, nor does the perception that I am an object of disgust distress me; in fact, the annoyance it has occasioned rather amuses me.

I like eating alone, because I am fond of having a particular dish to myself; hence I

néver make acquaintance with any of the people that belong to my club, for fear of an encroachment on the solitary table of my delicacies. I keep at a distance all who seem inclined to make any advance, by answering in repelling monosyllables, if required to speak : nor am I affable to any body but the waiter.

The reason that old people are generally fond of eating is, because they are unable to appreciate or enjoy any sensations but the mere gross one of taste. The power of smelling is very frequently languid ; that of sight nearly gone ; those of the intellect far immersed in their dotage : so that there is considerable excuse to be made for them, if they take refuge in the exercise of the only one left them.

After all, what is better or more gratifying than good eating ? Friendship ! what is it but a name ? this I have been taught ever since I was a child. Wealth ! what is it, except for what it can buy ? Beauty ! what is it ? like the flower, (as poets have said ever since the creation,) it charms but for a time, and perishes. What quality is there that we can name, which

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is not feeble and transitory ? Strength, health, youth, talent—they are only enjoyed for a time. But eating, good feasting, the savoury smell of hot well-dressed dishes, the substantial joys of the palate, have a flavour and relish, and afford gratification and nourishment from the cradle to the grave.

This part of my character may appear to some very much like a degradation of human nature. It is no less true, however, that such is a specimen of one of the precious qualities which my condition has forced on me.

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My old maiden sister is, like myself, a snuff-fancier. I used sometimes to spend an evening with her, and take snuff and coffee in her company till a late hour. She is the only one out of three sisters that is now alive : she is also the only one of them that was not married. This is surprising too, since she was by far the handsomest of them, and the most accomplished. There were few acquirements which she did not possess ; and, more or less, she used to amuse

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herself with botany, drawing, music, embroidery, and languages. Perhaps a certain flippancy of manner which she occasionally put on, or an idea amongst the men that she was too clever, may have deterred them from making her an offer. She has herself ever declared, that it has been her choice to remain single: that may be possible, but I am always inclined to think that women are glad to marry when they can. Perhaps she found no one to her taste: this is very probable, for she was somewhat fastidious, like myself. There she is now, toothless, grey-headed, and withered, in the place of that light, elegant, interesting creature I once remember her; her voice shrill and broken, which once was so soft and clear; her neck shrivelled and brown, which in youth was so fair and delicate. Upon my word, a wreck of much loveliness; a more striking picture of mortality than myself.

She is the least offensive old maiden lady of any that I remember. She has no pets; no fat wheezing pug-dogs always waddling about her. She is now too old to indulge in scandal: other-

wise she used to be very adroit in that amiable pastime. She still obstinately adheres to her maiden appellation of Miss—so-and-so. I have been on good terms with her so long, that I feel rather distressed at having lately quarrelled with her. The cause of it was this. On the last two or three occasions that I visited her, she chose to have in her company a person who was disagreeable to me. This was a pert, dowdy, plain girl, of about the age of four-and-twenty,—a jade made up of impudence, obstinacy, unamiability, and conceit. If I chanced to suggest any remark, she was sure to contradict it; if I made any inquiry, she had the impertinence to ridicule it. This I bore with wonderful forbearance once or twice; but the last time that I came into her company, she had the impudence to laugh at me to my face in a song, to which she requested I would listen, while she sang it at the piano-forte. Long before it was concluded, I perceived the purport of it; I seized my hat and cane in a fury, swore to my sister I would never enter her doors again, and, snatching up the obnoxious paper on

which the song was written, I hurried out of the house, venting imprecations on the whole sex.

My intention was to have destroyed the song the moment I got home: but was prevented from doing so by a violent spasm brought on by the passion I had been thrown into, which confined me to my bed for some days. Those who are curious to see the libel that so enraged me, are perfectly at liberty to gratify themselves.

CUPID'S PHYSICIAN.

(Addressed to an old single Gentleman.)

No more, ye love-sick maids, delight
In languishing to die;
A shorter way have I in sight
To kill you presently.

If, while your sorrow disappears
At purport of my lay,
No gratitude can wake your tears,
Perhaps your laughter may.

For, melted by your sighs, kind Love
Hath sent down his physician,
In pity, from the realms above,
To rescue your condition.

His upper man is cased in brown,
And dingy galligaskin
Infolds his person lower down,
And short boots lined with cat-skin.

Shrivell'd his visage, as a crab ;
And as for his complexion,
So well it counterfeith drab,
It baffles all detection.

They say there's poison in Love's kius,
Howe'er it may be sweet.
And, if I not mistake, in his,
Infection will you meet.

For potent are the mingled whiffs
Of wine and snuff he pours
From jaws as lank as hippogriff's,
And from his nostrils' doors.

Then haste, with votive garlic wreath,
To your love's solace match you ;
If his look fright you not to death,
His sighs must sure dispatch you.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH THE OLD BACHELOR'S EXPEDITION
AND HIS CONFESSIONS ARE CONCLUDED TO-
GETHER.

SCARCELY had the carriage brought me before my own door, than I earnestly explored its exterior, to detect any traces of nefarious irruption into it. The street-door was opened by Giles.

"What have the villains stolen?" I cried out; "where did they break in? why did you not secure them? how much plate did they run off with? why did you not take more care?—Here! open the carriage-door, and let me get out, that I may come and examine the extent of this cursed mischief!"

Giles was so much surprised at this volley of interrogatories, that he was able to answer nothing, but contented himself with staring: at length he turned his gaze from me upon Mrs. Busby, and was encouraged to find his tongue by a less irritable address from her.

"There have been no thieves at our house, Giles, have there, since Mr. —— has been away?"

"Thieves? bless you!" answered Giles.


"Ay, thieves, you blockhead!" I roared out.

"Thieves, Sir! no bless you, no such thing; what could have made you think so?"

"There, I told you so," said my housekeeper to me.

"Thank God! thank God, then! It is lucky for you, Barbara, I was mistaken, or you would not have heard the last of it as long as *I* lived—or *you* lived with me."

"I knew," she replied, "*you* were mistaken."
... "It was impossible you could be certain,"
I interrupted.



"Where was the robbery, Giles?" she continued.

"I'm sure I don't know," answered the astonished Giles; "I have heard of none: if there has been any, it has not been in this house, I am certain."

It was no small blessing to be relieved of the apprehension under which I had laboured: I could not, however, fully persuade myself of its being without reason, until I had unlocked the plate chest and made Barbara count its contents, and had also been informed by her that no furniture was missing. I afterwards learnt, upon inquiry, that a robbery *had* been committed, as the newspaper stated, in the same street in which I lived, but not to any considerable extent.

All this agitation, however, was sadly trying to my nerves, and glad was I to rest and recruit myself once more in my own house. My favourite large arm-chair afforded a repose that I had not known since I quitted it: and the sight of all my various conundrums once again

around me, repays me for the disgust I conceived at the strange appearance every thing wore on my journey.

The first thing that I shall think of will be, to replace the little thermometer which was so unfortunately smashed on the road to Sir Methusalem's. This circumstance brings to my mind the train of mishaps which I have undergone in the course of my journey, and makes me extort from my housekeeper a confession of the truth of my prediction, "that I should have cause to regret leaving my own door." I think I have reason to be thankful, that after having been overturned, mauled, and nearly drowned, I am nevertheless alive, and safe at home. The character of my expedition affords a complete exemplification of that of my life: in almost every stage of it, teeming with calamities and complaints, replete with difficulties, annoyances, and disgusts; fretted by evils both real and imaginary; assailed by disasters which no one else would have experienced but a being of such sinister fortunes, and so unhappy a disposition as myself.

With respect to the main subject of this work, my "Confessions," I think the plan I proposed to myself, in writing it, has been pretty faithfully executed. I think I have described at sufficient length the effects of all those causes which an earlier portion of it sets forth. I fancy that all my habits of mind, as well as of body, have been exposed without disguise or prevarication.

Perhaps in the mention of some particulars I have been too scrupulous: if, therefore, I have been guilty of an error, I trust it will be imputed to its true cause—a conscientious motive.

The moral to be deduced from this exposure of myself is obvious:—it is an admonition to all men to be any thing rather than that which I am; to suffer their crosses and cares to drive them to any extremity rather than that of celibacy. If they have experienced distress in life let them seek a balm in a matrimonial alliance of judgment—if not of love: it is the only condition in which they may hope for any true respectability or repose. Again, let them not be too long in fixing their minds on mar-

riage, or they have my example for never being likely to accomplish their object at all.

If they marry, and yet should meet with causes of dissatisfaction, (for in what state will they not ?) at any rate their anxieties will be exercised on more worthy subjects than mine are. They will not be rendered frantic because a boot fits a little too tightly, or a dinner is not exactly so well dressed as it might be: their minds will not be in that ignoble condition which frets itself about the meanest and most insignificant subjects. If they are men of nervous and irritable dispositions, they will exercise them in a different way—less offensive, and less wicked than my own. The slightest inconvenience of noise, or discomfort of any sort, sets me whining, grumbling, and railing, kicking my legs out, and twitching my elbows, in all the indulgence of angry nervousness, as if I were under the operation of galvanism.

I have no satisfactory reflection, which the married man has, that I have promoted the great ordinance of Providence, that the generations of the world shall continue till he

sweeps them away. I can claim no share in that blessing which is signally extended to the married state : I am shut out from that happiness which a father must feel in the well-being and success of his sons. I cannot claim the affections and succour of children, to comfort and cherish my declining years—to close my eyes on the pillow of death. The evils I endure, are a vast counterbalance to those which a parent must feel even in the disappointment of his hopes with respect to his children's success ; I speak of such hopes as are sanguine. Parents are often inclined to hope too much of their children, from a partiality which causes them to appreciate their talents and merits too highly. I may, indeed, consider myself in a better condition than those whose children have turned out ill ; but this will rarely, it will *never* be the case, where the education of the children has been salutary, judicious, and properly attended to ; the children's natural propensities carefully watched ; such as are vicious repressed ; such as are weak strengthened ; such as are good promoted. If a father neglects

this duty, it is no proof of his goodness either of head or heart ; and consequently, if his children, through his mismanagement, turn out badly, *he* will not be the sort of person who is likely to be much affected with their disgrace.

Pride, too, must mingle in my reflections ; —those who have rank, those who have affluence, must be denied by celibacy the boast of bequeathing it to their offspring.

The best admonition, after all, of the unhappiness of my condition, its unworthiness and degradation, is, that I, who may be allowed to know best what it is, execrate it.

Let my last words be devoted to the mention of her who *ought* to have been my wife.

It is now full ten years ago since I went into public evening assemblies. At the last which I visited, I met Ellen. She had been married some years to a person altogether unworthy of her ; a coarse, vulgar Scotchman, who had made a fortune by trading in India, and on his return from abroad had commenced Highland laird. He was, indeed, master of considerable

territory, and his influence commanded him a seat in Parliament, and that was all that could reflect any shadow of respectability upon him. His tastes were so grovelling, and his ideas so narrow, that the wealth he possessed was directed to no liberal objects, instrumental to no purposes which an elegant mind would advance. Pearls are not more thrown away on swine, than Ellen was upon this Highland booby. Her countenance did not testify that much satisfaction had been derived from her alliance. She looked melancholy and disappointed; her voice and manner, too, betrayed that she felt so. These feelings she endeavoured to soften down by an air of resignation; but it was evidently much forced upon her.

I saw it caused her pain when I reverted to the days when I had last seen and known her; I therefore abandoned the subject, or any thing which would have reference to it. I had time, however, to learn that she had lost her mother a short time after her marriage: and that, of her sisters, one was married and had gone abroad, and the other was living in Edinburgh.

They are, perhaps, all dead by this time, my dear Ellen and all.

Time had not been more active than care in impairing Ellen's beauty. She still bore the traces of much loveliness. But the youthful lustre of her eye, the cheerfulness of her look, the lightness of her air, could never be read in her present look of depression and resigned placidity of demeanour. Her person was become larger, her complexion pale, and its wrinkles were stealthily increasing every day. Yet still her features spoke how handsome she had once been; and the contour of her face had lost little of its original softness. A slight blush tinged her cheek when I addressed myself to her children. They consisted of four girls, nothing comparable to their mother in face or form. The eldest was nearly twenty. She knew the conclusion I should draw in my own mind when I saw them, that *her* children ought not to have called a clown and a shopkeeper their father.

Our parting was not less painful than our meeting had been—we quitted each other with

a sigh ; she, to follow her uncongenial lord—I to my solitude, and to lament that it, together with its disgusts, had been mainly occasioned by the loss of herself !

THE END.

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